REFERENCE AS ACTION

Space and Time in Later Wittgenstein

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*The book is dedicated to
my mother Protima Mitra
for lifelong support*

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Writing a formal acknowledgement compels one, in a way, to compose a meta-narrative that does no justice to all the dense details and the many sources and occasions of help that have gone into the making of this book. The sprawling history of the author's interaction with various people at various levels – where the so-called 'academic' blends with the 'semi-academic' and the 'non-academic' – can at best be frozen in the shape of a list – a list that would simply be 'referring to' and not 'describing' the rich structure and inter-relations among the events.

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Abbreviations

BB   The Blue and Brown Books

NB   Notebooks

PG   Philosophical Grammar

PI   Philosophical Investigations

PR   Philosophical Remarks

RFM   Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics

ROC   Remarks on Colour

RPP   Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology

Z   Zettel

PO   Philosophical Occasions

Introduction

Referring is normally equated with pointing to a spatio-temporally continuous, single, cohesive individual, while describing or meaning pertains to ascribing abstract properties or qualities. Qualifying Strawson's observations in *Individuals*, chapter I,[1] we are naturally inclined to say that while bodies, shadows, rivers, nations, even events and series can be referred, properties, classes or numbers cannot be referred in the same vein. Before this common sense-conception takes us any further, it receives a jolt at two extremes: the Platonic transmutation of the abstract, general properties into Ideal referents on the one hand, and the Russellian 'construction' of the apparently complete and unitary individuals into a scattered, loose configuration on the other, something that can only be described, never referred. But what tends to persist in both philosophy and common sense is the catchy slogan of the irreducible primordiality of reference, as contrasted with the optional and excessive character of descriptions, merely adding upon the pure presence of the referred object. It is with this rhetoric of a foundational dichotomy between reference and description that my present work begins, only to dismiss it radically in the light of Wittgenstein's anti-foundationalist tools which he deployed effectively in his later writings.

I propose to work through the following phases. The first chapter, constituting the first phase, will revisit the dominant theories on this issue—viz., those of Frege, Russell, early Wittgenstein, Strawson, Donnellan, Kripke and Putnam—with a view to exposing their pitfalls. The second phase (chapters II

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[1] P. F. Strawson, *Individuals* (London: Methuen, 1974).

and III) will attempt to present a consistent and radical anti-essentialist reading of later Wittgenstein and place the issue of reference and description within this rubric. This will show the above theories as working with a false dichotomy of the foundation and the founded, which ultimately dissolves into uses—a seamless blend between verbal and non-verbal actions. The third phase (chapters IV and V) takes up the question whether and in what sense Wittgenstein's language and grammar are autonomous, i.e., whether and in what sense reference consists in pre-verbal actions that do not fall back on pre-given space-time containers. The question of reference is related with the question of truth in the final phase (chapter VI), where the key insights of Wittgenstein are rehearsed in this new rubric. The *modus operandi* of each of these phases may be detailed as follows.

1. First Phase

The need for a pre-interpretive ground for all descriptions and interpretations constrained the prevalent theories on reference and description. Frege found it in the 'sense' of the third realm (which actually was a referrable item in the indirect context); Russell and early Wittgenstein found it in their logical atoms; Kripke and Putnam found it in their transworld identity. I shall argue that even Strawson, with his pragmatic orientation and the attempted deontologisation of the Russellian cleavage between proper names and descriptions, could not break through the foundationalist framework within which such essential schisms and dichotomies get their foothold. Strawson invoked the notion of a conceptual scheme in his philosophy within which the syntactic placement of the definite description in the subject-position of a sentence as well as its descriptive content enjoyed a pre-interpretative status that is sufficient to take us to the unique reference. Donnellan's challenge to Strawson was only encased in his various foundational commitments—to a pre-linguistic intention achieving unique reference to a pre-linguistic object

waiting out there, and causing the referential function of the word. Further, he could not appreciate that the semantic content of a descriptive phrase is ruptured not only externally, but also internally, destabilising the professed success of the attributive use of definite descriptions.

Kripke's attempt to present us with a genuine ontological necessity in the shape of an irreducible transworld reference too falls to the ground. He abstracts the referential identity from all changes and historical vicissitudes; considers possible worlds as an analogue of the dice-throwing scenario[2] (thus conventionally freezing the notion of necessity to a strictly bivalent model); compares the vagueness of an essential property with that of baldness—all these moves clearly betraying the contrived or *de dicto* character of necessity and reference, notwithstanding its professed *de re* status.[3]

2. Second Phase

The dominant message that we get in Wittgenstein's later texts, particularly the *Philosophical Investigations, Philosophical Remarks, Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology, Zettel, Philosophical Investigations and On Certainty*, may be summarised as follows. Language cannot be founded upon something more primordial than language itself, something that has a definite origin and boundary that marks it off and yet has the magical power of drawing the entire corpus of language to rest on it. None of the usually proposed foundations—universals, physical ostension, mental images, verbal rules, nervous excitements, brain patterns or even forms of life—can be claimed to have a pre-linguistic or extra-linguistic character that can serve as the desired origin and justification of language. The later Wittgenstein's engagement with the foundations of language is an exercise in dissolving this putative cleavage, of

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[2] Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (Boston, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 15–20.

[3] Ibid., pp. 114–15, footnote 57.

weaving the foundation and the founded into an indissoluble whole, into an open expanse of uses, ever indeterminate and ever incomplete. For Wittgenstein, an essentialist cannot build his case on a supposed primacy of reference, a pre-semantic foundation underlying and opposed to all deviances and indeterminacies that pertain to meaning or description. The way he breaks through this classical divide between reference and description may be condensed as follows:

(a) The difference between reference and description consists in an interactive play, where the referring game is merely the preparatory move, like putting pieces on the board, or fetching building blocks at the call of the builder. The actual moves played out in the course of the game, operating with the inner structure or composition of each of the building stones, integrating the blocks into a continuous structure, figure as the corresponding games of description.

(b) However, the games of referring are by no means learned through a transparent encounter with putatively given objects. This simple or elementary character of the referring games is *relative*—relative to that particular simple–complex interplay in which it is embodied. The elementary move of referring in one game can figure as quite a sophisticated and complex move of description in another game.

(c) In other words, simplicity and complexity are not absolute in Wittgenstein's philosophy. The constant metamorphosis of simple into complex and vice versa also breaks through the claims of unique analysis and ultimate terminus of analysis popularised in logical atomism.

(d) Thus, reference is constructed in and through use, and the referred object does not pre-exist as a given chunk to make the referring use possible. Wittgenstein suggests that the numerical identification of things is not simply given, but a game we have to learn through an elaborate ostensive programming. Any attempt to pin down a fixed, originary moment of complete identification—be it with ostension, or

rational intuition, or measurement—will produce an endless regress of origins.

3. Third Phase

The third phase takes up the question whether and in what sense Wittgenstein's language and grammar are autonomous. In this connection, it presents both McDowell's critique of non-conceptualist theories of reference,[4] as well as Wittgenstein's own version of conceptualism, as effectively blending the spontaneity of concepts with the parallel need for an external constraint. A very contemporary version of the non-conceptualist theories of reference propounded by A. Raftopoulos,[5] based on the cutting-edge technological discoveries of neuro-psychological data, shall be presented in this phase only to demonstrate its inherent pitfalls and vulnerabilities, especially against the conceptualist leanings of both Wittgenstein and McDowell's writings. McDowell seeks to achieve the reconciliation between the required receptivity and autonomy of concepts by demonstrating how we realise our receptive nature through a spontaneous operation of conceptual principles as freely following the tracks already laid down in reality.

While McDowell claims that his preferred version of conceptualism is virtually an explicit development of Wittgenstein's scattered and cryptic reflections, I seek to float a different reading of Wittgenstein. I shall argue that while there is an appreciable extent of proximity between these two philosophers, Wittgenstein operated with an anti-foundationalist agenda regarding language, concepts and actions which is more radical than that availed of or appreciated by McDowell. I shall argue that space for McDowell is already laid out as containing objects and their intermediary distances, so that our receptive

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[4] John McDowell, *Mind and World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996).

[5] A. Raftopoulos, 'Reference, Perception and Attention', *Philosophical Studies*, vol. 144 (2009), pp. 339–60.

nature is voluntarily activated only in terms of that given structure. On the other hand, for Wittgenstein, we create space—it is our actions that in a sense condense and rarefy space in the pattern of objects and their internecine relations. This is the sustained tenor of this work, one that recurs doggedly at every juncture. That is, an intellectually honest appreciation of Wittgenstein's view of reference requires nothing less than a comprehensive and systematic presentation of his view of space and time, as to how it outgrows the old containment idioms nascent (in substantially different ways) within the theories of both Newton and Einstein, at least in their respective philosophical versions.

4. Fourth Phase

As reference always invites description, thereby spreading out into the notion of truth, Wittgenstein's anti-foundational insights must be rehearsed in this broader framework, incorporating the crucial notions of both truth and reference. This is done in the final phase and the final chapter of this work. Here, the chief objective is to see how truth as a motley of language-games— related by family resemblances—takes us beyond the closures of realism, anti-realism and deflationism. What follows is a rough synopsis of each of the six chapters that constitute this work.

The first chapter, as its title suggests, is a brief resume of the principal theories on the notions of reference and description, viz., those of Russell, Frege, Strawson, Donnellan, Kripke and Putnam. Sensing that Strawson's theory of reference and presupposition displays more significant areas of comparison with Wittgenstein,[6] I have presented an especially elaborate account of Strawson. The attempt to locate all these philosophers in terms of their respective brands of descriptivism and non-descriptivism, along with the exercise of sensitising ourselves to their internal conflicts and tensions, opens up the routes through which the later Wittgenstein outgrows their common follies and presumptions. Chapter I ends with the cryptic suggestion

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[6] See P. F. Strawson, 'On Referring', in A. P. Martinich (ed.), *Philosophy of Language* (London: Routledge, 2009, Vol I); and Strawson, *Individuals*.

that, for Wittgenstein, the notorious semantic gap between description and the referent can be bridged not by further and further ostensions and descriptions (descriptivism), nor by an external object (of whose referential identity the user may be totally ignorant) as causally determining the reference (non-descriptivism); rather, this gap is bridged in uses and actions in which the description and reference are blended together.

The second chapter progressively rolls out in three sections an extensive and comprehensive exposition of later Wittgenstein's view of reference. The first section demonstrates how none of the proposed foundations of reference—the ostended object, verbal rules and descriptions, physical and mental ostension, grammatical sortals, quantitative measurement, physiological foundations like Gestalts or brain patterns—have the required self-interpretive character to take us to a unique and unfailing reference. What are proposed as external grounds of reference spread out in an endless series of practices, internalising the reference into a mesh of linguistic and non-linguistic actions. The pattern and direction of these arguments are grafted onto Wittgenstein's notion of grammar—grammar not as trailing behind or duplicating a pre-given reality, but as an autonomous paradigm of describing or constructing the same in and through an ever-incomplete flow of activities. The strands of the numerous arguments, equipped with an overwhelming variety of examples, are all are geared to a basic objective: that of exposing the common folly shared by the non-descriptivist and the descriptivist, viz., their failure to appreciate this inbuilt opacity of language and all interpretative exercise. The crucial insight that both these camps fail to register is that the notorious gap between description and reference exhibited by epistemological relativism (in the Quinean or Kripkean style) itself wrongly presumes the semantic transparency of both the referent and the description. As already indicated, Wittgenstein bridges this gap in an intra-linguistic harmony between language and reality, which ultimately dissolves into uses and actions blending description and reference together in a seamless complex.

The second section of chapter II goes on to relate this non-foundational character of reference to certain special cases where the referring tools (of both the semantic and syntactic categories) are patently absent, as in elliptical sentences and sentences with empty terms. We set off Wittgenstein's approach to elliptical sentences against the Fregean treatment on the one hand, and the Naiyāyika/Mīmāṁsaka polemics on the issue. Wittgenstein's treatment of empty names with certain illustrations figuring in *Philosophical Investigations* is contrasted against both Russell's and Strawson's theories, along with a construal of the kind of analyses that they would possibly undertake with respect to these examples. The entire exercise in this context is designed to show how Wittgenstein's view of reference—in both its general and special orientations—breaks through the traditional Russell Strawson controversy.

The third section of this chapter addresses the crucial notion of grammar to dissipate all remnants of its putative foundational status with respect to reference. Here we deal specifically with *Zettel*, taking note of the special style and content of Wittgenstein's arguments against the typically foundationalist claim in *Zettel*: grammar scaffolds pre-given facts in the manner of a tool cutting soil to explore the routes and abhor the voids respectively, already laid out from one stationary point to the others. This imagery thrives on a mistaken notion of space as an external and inert container, configured into terminal nodes and paths running between certain of these nodes, and itself creating vacuums or voids between certain others. According to this picture, grammatical propositions, like 'There are four primary colours,' 'There is bluish green,' 'There is no reddish green,' '2 + 2 = 4,' or 'A triangle is not a square,' are supposed to trail behind all these pre-given objects, paths and voids supposedly *contained in* space.

The crux of Wittgenstein's contention against these foundationalist theories of grammar may be phrased as follows: The purported paths or gaps lying between colours, substances and sensations are not real but geometrical—they are means

or paradigms of referring or describing, which ultimately boil down to different modes of action that are *not* constrained by real lumps in space or real paths and gaps existing in between. It is our actions that sometimes create space in a pattern of objects and routes, and sometimes warp space into delinked blockages. The difference between spatial paths and voids is an internal distinction obtaining *within* actions of two different styles—smooth versus staggered modes of navigation. The officious dichotomy between the two options—of grammar being *in* the nature of things or being in *our* nature—is hereby exposed as labouring under the myth of two spaces—external reality and the mind, with a void in between—across which the latter space is envisaged as imposing its schemes on the former.

The way Wittgenstein outgrows the standard dichotomy between descriptivism and non-descriptivism has been turned in a different direction in the third chapter, which unfolds again in three sections. The first section is preoccupied with the psychological-cum-neurological version of non-descriptivism propounded by A. Raftopoulos.[7] According to this theory, (visual) reference is achieved progressively through milliseconds, where events of infinitesimal duration—viz., stimulus onset, feed-forward sweep and spatial attention—fuse the scattered features of the stimuli into single units with initial boundaries. It is these flat (technically 2.5-dimensional) fragmentary objects, bereft of any sortal conceptualisation under 'substance', 'thing', 'shape' or 'colour', that are pre-conceptually, pre-attentionally referred to as 'this' or 'that' in our phenomenal consciousness. While giving a somewhat detailed account of this theory, I have also taken care to set it against some of its philosophical counterparts, viz., the non-descriptivist theories of Russell and Kripke, taking note of some vital differences. A Wittgensteinian critique of Raftopoulos's theory is undertaken in this section. A nagging problem in all non-descriptivist theories of reference is that they cannot explain how the non-conceptual referent (here,

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[7] Raftopoulos, 'Reference, Perception and Attention'.

the 2.5-D objects) can *justify* our concepts and judgements. Here we also utilise Wittgenstein's elaborate refutation of the standard theories of memory (mainly narrated in *Zettel*), showing their sheer unavailability for explaining the interface between the conceptual and the non-conceptual in a non-conceptual theory like that of Raftopoulos.

What emerges as the positive upshot of Wittgenstein's critique of this theory may be condensed as follows. The professed account of sweeping out 2.5-D referents into full-bodied 3D objects is not a neurological procedure of thickening out passive flat images through a fine-tuned axis of milliseconds; it is rather a process where relatively simple actions are thickened out into an extended rubric absorbing a greater expanse of space into itself. I weave Alva Noe's enactive theory of perception,[8] as well as Roger Jones's resistance to the official theories of space and time, not only to strengthen Wittgenstein's critique of Raftopoulos's view, but also to reckon how Wittgenstein's view of perception, action, space and time navigate in a more provocatively non-foundational direction.

The second section of chapter III presents a detailed exposition of McDowell's critique of non-conceptualism to show how his tools can be effectively deployed against the different versions of this theory.[9] This is an appropriate occasion to see how McDowell's insightful treatment of the theory of non-conceptualism, the doctrine of private language as well as the mental causation view of action (principally endorsed by Davidson[10]), brings all of these under the same genre and activates the same critique against all of them. Wittgenstein's critique of private language and the positive significance of his referring game of privacy are also addressed in this connection.

The third section notes that both McDowell and Wittgenstein are comfortably agreed on many tracks: in their

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[8] Alva Noe, *Action in Perception* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004).

[9] McDowell, *Mind and World*.

[10] Donald Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001).

sustained resistance against a non-conceptual antecedent as somehow being the referential foundation of perception, or a purely mental intention as justifying the subsequent action, despite the latter being simply a blind and brutal happening of nature that is sharply distinct from the former. However, they fail to synchronise on some of the major notes. While McDowell retains the traditional distinction between the content and the act of perception (and thus the distinction between perception and action), for Wittgenstein perceptions are virtually embedded in actions. While McDowell delivers the commendable philosophical feat of coalescing receptivity and spontaneity, his performance is perhaps still constrained by the containment model of space. But Wittgenstein's philosophy works with an enactive notion of space. It is in this sense that in Wittgenstein's philosophy, actions, usages and forms of life do not fall back upon pre-actional identities from which actions set off; there are no pre-use usable objects from which use is to start off, no given content which forms of life have to format.

The note upon which the previous chapter ends, viz., that reference obtains in and through actions and not any pre-actional foundation, can be carried on to an interesting and inevitable route of extension. If the reference and description of noun-words dissipate into actions, so would that of the action-words themselves. The fourth chapter undertakes a detailed examination of the ontology and semantics of actions and action-words, intending to liquidise the purported extensional identity of the action supposedly spread beyond the alternative descriptions. We shall try to demonstrate that this putative extension of action-words comes either in the shape of a primary intention receiving an array of secondary ones, or a basic action where the end–means considerations terminate, or a brute physical event having a bare spatio-temporal boundary prior to receiving all intensional ascriptions. There will be two principal strategies of invalidating all these options.

The first is to show that for Wittgenstein, actions are not caused by mental antecedents, but blend with wish, will and

the so-called mental antecedents to forge an indissoluble whole, leaving no scope for any of the proposed extensions to take shape. This exercise is carried out in contrast with the action theory of Davidson, who, in spite of conscientiously problematising the task of separating the mental causal antecedent from the action, goes on to undertake a hair-splitting analysis to sustain the split, which Wittgenstein dissolves in the long run.

The second strategy of undoing the extensional base of actions will be to mesh the adverbial modifiers of actions (mainly of the 'excuse' genre, like 'intentionally', 'unintentionally', 'voluntarily, involuntarily, etc.) with the putatively unmodified referent of the verbs themselves. As we know, this second exercise is a programme which is archetypally executed by Austin in his 'A Plea For Excuses';[11] we propose to read similar strands of thought in Wittgenstein's observations on actions, as well as a move to dissipate the dogged remnants of the bare referential identity of the action once and for all.

The programme of the fourth chapter as detailed above will be conveniently structured in five sections. The first two sections focus on Davidson's action theory,[12] with a view to exposing his basic foundationalist agenda, which will presently be displaced within a Wittgensteinian framework. The third section may be said to be an offshoot of the second, where several versions of the causal theory—like William James's proposal of voluntary action as being caused by a characteristic memory-image of the appropriate limb movement,[13] innervations theory, and the attempt theory of O'Shaughnessy[14]—are reviewed and discarded

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[11] J. L. Austin, 'A Plea for Excuses', in R. R. Ammerman (ed.), *Classics of Analytic Philosophy* (Bombay: Tata McGraw-Hill, 1965).

[12] Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events*.

[13] Williams James, The Principles of Psychology (London: Macmillan, 1891), discussed in Michael Scott, 'Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Action', *Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 46, no. 184 (July 1996), pp. 347–63.

[14] B. O'Shaughnessy, *The Will: A Dual Aspect Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), discussed in Scott, 'Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Action'.

from Wittgenstein's perspective. The fourth section opens up a fruitful comparison between Austin and Wittgenstein with regard to their approach to adverbs and adverbial modifiers of actions. They will be found to concur on the point that actions are not neutral events that lie beneath the adverbial modifiers, upon which the latter are added. Following the main track of this comparative exercise, I have extended the tension between actions and modifiers to the notion of freedom and volition to weave the latter with our central and semantic issue of reference and description. I have also attempted to reconstruct these patently philosophical issues—viz., freedom, the splits between action and modifier, reference and description of action-words, etc.—in a patently non-philosophical area, viz., that of sexual actions.

While all through the preceding chapters, my engagement with Wittgenstein's view of reference capitalises on an *enactive* construction of space with an effective opposition to the official models of both Newton and Einstein, the style of this engagement is mainly illustrative and focused on Wittgenstein himself. However, I have not yet opened up the common framework of idioms to activate valid tracks of comparison and contrast, agreements and dissensions; this needs to be done before one can legitimately appreciate the irreducible originality in Wittgenstein's insights on the notion of space-time. I will undertake this task in the fifth chapter, which again runs through four sections.

As Davidson's view of event as a space-time outline of actions is dominantly couched in a containment model, the very first section of chapter V will look into Newton's theory of space and time, especially in its philosophical aspect. Here we shall be dealing with Wittgenstein's analysis of the surface grammar of statements on space—the grammar that fashions the misleading ontology of space as a substantive container, incorporeal and invisible in nature.

The second section makes a brief entry into Russell's theory of matter, space and time, which is impressively different from

that of Newton—working against one all-pervading space-time container housing well-defined objects with neat and respectable boundaries. For Russell, the single material substance is shown to dissipate into innumerable sense-data, each of which is situated in a unique private space. However, I shall argue that Russell's scheme of constructing the single material substance in universal space-time from discrete and momentary sense-data is ultimately framed in the containment idiom. Overall, Russell's theory also fuels the prevalent tendency to conform to the traditional ontology of actions as trailing behind pre-given objects and events. I shall try to argue that, though for Russell, matter, space and time are not given but constructed, the principles of construction fall back on their veiled givenness.

The third section explores the crucial disanalogy between two pairs of opposition— Russell's theory of the private space-time versus the public one, and Wittgenstein's distinction between the private and the public. This exercise will substantially draw upon Jakko Hintikka's important commentary on Wittgenstein's notion of time.[15] I shall argue that Hintikka was not able to appreciate fully the significance of Wittgenstein's distinction between private time, perspectival time and public time, and unduly placed them on the same footing with Einstein's problem of integrating local times within the framework of a universal time—the theme of the special theory of relativity.

In the fourth section, I shall examine whether and how Wittgenstein's notion of space and time outgrows the Einsteinian model, or at least the philosophical version of the same, defying its semantic requirement of public time geared to the absolute velocity of light and a uniform numerical system of measurement. I attempt to show that Wittgenstein's view on space and time defies the Newtonian containment model on the one hand, and the Einsteinian scheme of time moving as a one-dimensional vertical axis of space in a uniformly clockable structure of milliseconds on the other.

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[15] Jakko Hintikka, 'Wittgenstein on Being and Time', *Theoria*, vol. 62, nos 1–2 (2008), pp. 3–18.

To press the crucial claim about the primacy of action in this study, it is necessary to consolidate the enactive view of perception—the view that action *constitutes* perception and is not merely a causal correlate of the latter. A comprehensive reinstatement of this enactive view will be effectively projected in the last section of chapter V as a neat exit point. I shall however concentrate mainly on the phenomenon of enacting colour— chiefly because my engagements with actions so far have been in terms of enacting the so-called things or substances, or visual and (occasionally) tactual perception in general. In the official scenario of semantic theories, colour and pain project themselves with an irresistible force as being the ideal candidates for the privileged position of referents—the only genuine bits of reality capable of being picked out independent of all conception and construction. As pain (or rather the phenomenon of enacting sensations in general) has hopefully been covered under the elaborate account of privacy in chapter III, this last section can justifiably centre on colour, attempting to relieve it of its typically pre-actional or pre-enactive status. This exercise will hopefully round off the long tour undertaken by the present work—its long quest for reference—with a colourfully climatic finish.

It is, however, difficult to keep reference away from truth. They invite each other in many routes and aspects, and this brings us to the last phase and the last chapter of this work. For later Wittgenstein, the preliminary games of referring must have a tendency to move towards the more complicated exercises of combining the pieces, though not necessarily in the propositional game with truth-values. However, for most philosophers, reference calls for an expansion into truth and, conversely, truth, a recoil into reference; furthermore, truth is accorded the supreme status of being the ground of all non-truth uses like interrogation, optation, conjectures, fictive speculations, play acting, etc.

We have noted the customary claims of the standard theories regarding the ontological or epistemological specialities of reference—viz., reference being geared to the pure being or

non-qualitative basis of the referent, or being uniquely available to a transparent sense housed in the third realm. Similarly, many official positions attempt to substantiate truth in terms of correspondence with facts, or at least internal coherence among propositions or a relation of practical efficacy between the proposition and the external world. There is another camp that would not be ready to accord any *substantial* content to truth, rejecting all the options proposed above. On this view, the role of a truth predicate, when attached to a proposition or sentence, is simply to baptise it, to uphold it for introduction into a discourse. Obviously, the first camp has some apparent similarities with descriptive theories of reference, while the latter camp, in so far as they *deflate* truth as a non-connotational name of the sentence (or proposition), is likely to invite some comparisons with some of the non-descriptive theories of reference.

This new rubric of truth and reference erupts into a space of new queries and confusions—say a strife between substantivism and deflationism on the nature of truth; questions of whether and in what way this opposition can be translated into a parallel opposition in the sphere of reference; or how far these issues settle the professed primacy of truth over the non-propositional uses of language. Here we see once again how Wittgenstein dissolves all these official battle lines to recast our conception of these dichotomies in terms of language-games. It is not only the substantive ontology of facts and correspondence that is questionable; rather, from Wittgenstein's viewpoint, even the theories of idealism, pragmatism and verificationism can be seen to labour under false foundational splits. The complete coherence amongst propositions invokes a semantic determinism of primitives and verbal rules, whereas pragmatism claims an inherent power in certain propositions at the edges of the verbal enclosure whereby it can break out from its enclosure and blend with a non-verbal efficacy or utility. It should be noted that while Wittgenstein seems to place a high premium on needs and interests, he can never allow a pre-applicational meaning

of a proposition that would yet generate a unique application of efficacy.

As for verificationism as endorsed by Dummett, its attempt to cash out truth or reference in terms of specified verificational procedures clearly alienates itself from Wittgenstein's approach. As Putnam has pointed out, our truth-games, even with 'unobservable entities', are grounded in our pre-verbal actions and attitudes, which may get extended into stipulations of certain verificational techniques. It is precisely for this reason that such techniques cannot enjoy the primacy of capturing the meaning of truth-games. On the other hand, theories which deflate the truth predicate into the non-connotational name of a sentence (or proposition) only do so at the cost of inflating the so-called 'nameable' items with complete syntactic and semantic status—an exercise which virtually begs the question of their truth conditions.

Truth, for Wittgenstein, cannot be captured by any of these capsules wearing ontological, logical, utilitarian or stipulational garb. Like all language, truth language too spreads out into a family of games—sometimes it assumes the status of a preparatory move, sometimes the shape of a dimension to discard some unwanted influences, sometimes to put up an extensional stance, or sometimes to call attention to certain qualities of the speaker which the hearer deems important. And most interestingly, just as reference-games occasionally swerve to so-called 'empty terms' (as noted in the second chapter), truth-games too sometimes flare up a claim of 'recognition-transcendence' of truth itself—in a game that is marked by its tendency to stretch beyond the limits in an incomplete series of progressive juxtapositions.

In the first two sections of this last chapter, I shall try to comprehend the salient points of both the official theories of substantivism, as well as of deflationism, along with the internal variations figuring in both of them. The third and the fourth sections deal with the standard objections against both these theories, making a place for Dummett's verificationism as

offering a third alternative. The fifth section will be devoted exclusively to Wittgenstein's engagements with truth—truth as a cluster of language-games related by family resemblances that dissolve all the official positions, of Frege, the substantivists, the verificationists as well as the deflationists. In the last two sections, I revert deliberately from truth to reference—or rather, to deflationary theories of reference. For this, I shall rely solely on Arvid Bave's paper for both the exposition as well as the criticism of these theories.[16] Here I am moved by two specific curiosities. The first is to figure out how Wittgenstein might possibly have responded to the various stylised schema of reference formulated by the deflationists. The second is to see whether Bave's criticism of all the deflationary theories of reference throws up any interesting lines of connection with that of Wittgenstein. I find myself ending up once more with an exclusively Wittgensteinian rejoinder, this time to Bave's attempted revisions of the deflationary schema, which unfortunately works within the same foundationalist tracks of reference of one category or another. This will hopefully cut out a neat exit path for the protracted quest for reference, or rather, allow us to begin to enact our philosophical claims in and through our language-games, in real space and real time.

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[16] Arvid Bave, 'Deflationary Theory of Reference', *Synthese*, vol. 169, no. 1 (July 2009), pp. 51–73.

Reference: The Foundationalist Backdrop

We do not need philosophy of language to grasp the correlative notions of reference and description. To borrow Strawson's neat statement on the distinction: they are the two main purposes of language. The referring function answers the question, 'what are you talking about?', and the description function answers the question, 'what are you saying about it?'[1] Besides, we usually take reference to be in the singular, whereby the following definition seems acceptable to us: 'To refer is to pick out a single thing, person or event, usually taken to be spatio-temporally continuous.'

We also readily appreciate two platitudes. First, there is no fundamental distinction between reference and description in terms of signs in language. A proper name, which is usually a referring expression (in short, a 'referrer'), can also be a predicate or a description and vice versa, as we find in sentences like 'Calcutta is no Delhi,' and 'Red Fort is not red.' Needless to say, the proper name 'Delhi' and the predicate-word 'red' in 'Red Fort' exchange their respective grammatical (part of speech) statuses in the two occurrences. Second, we do not think that referents form a special ontological realm, having an indivisible content that cannot be described. We frequently use expressions such as 'frame of reference', 'reference to the context', 'reference food' as contrasted with 'concept food' (here, 'reference food' stands for principal cereals, uncooked or cooked in a no-frills style, while 'concept food' refers to delicacy

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[1] Strawson, 'On Referring'.

items embellished with culinary innovations). In none of these cases do we feel intrigued by any unique ontological status of referents vis-à-vis non-referents. We simply take the referents to be answering to the expressions grammatically placed in the subject-position whose descriptive content is addressed by the predicative function—both functions being interchangeable.

1. Russell's Theory of Reference

We can say that this apparently simple distinction was—in a way—first problematised by Russell, who turned it into a fundamental dichotomy in both its linguistic and ontological dimensions.[2] For him, there have to be special terms in language that can only be referrers, never descriptions, and vice versa; there has to be an ontologically special realm of objects that can only be referred, never described—objects which lend themselves to combinations that can only be described, never referred. Russell sought to show that definite descriptions (phrases of the form 'the so and so') and ordinary proper names are *not* referrers, and here he stands apart from Frege, his predecessor.[3] For Russell, whatever phrase or expression we use in language, in order to be unambiguous it needs to be ultimately analysable to absolutely simple symbols. Let us consider the sentence,

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[2] For expositions of his theory of names and description, see Bertrand Russell, 'On Denoting', in A. P. Martinich (ed.), *Philosophy of Language* (London: Routledge, 2009), vol. I; Russell, 'Descriptions', in R. R. Ammerman (ed.), *Classics of Analytic Philosophy* (Bombay: Tata McGraw-Hill, 1965); and Russell, Philosophy of Logical Atomism, in R. C. Marsh (ed.), *Logic and Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1994).

[3] Though Frege had quite a complex and overpopulated ontology in three realms—sense, truth-values as objects, saturated and unsaturated entities (objects and concepts), he never held referents to be bare or non-descriptional. Rather, they must lay themselves out in a complex and configurational character, to be available via properties or descriptions. Frege's theory figures in Gottlob Frege, 'On Sinn und Bedeutung' (1892), in *The Frege Reader*, ed. Michael Beaney (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997).

'*The President of India* visited the Indian Institute of Advanced Study in Shimla.' Now what do we need to do to make the italicised definite description unambiguously pick out a unique referent? We go on substituting definite descriptions, but as long as there is a complex symbol in the substituted phrases, they will be multiply satisfiable. A symbol, to be complex, has to be a configuration of simpler symbols, and with the same set of symbols we can have alternative combinations. As long as a unique configuration is not laid out in terms of absolutely simple symbols, as long as even one complex remains as an unanalysed lump, the expression will not attain a unique reference. So, for Russell, language and reality must boil down to absolute simples to achieve a disambiguated one–one correspondence with each other. For an expression to pick out a unique individual, i.e., to be a referrer, it has to be simple, i.e., it cannot have any descriptive content.

A question that arises pertinently at this juncture is, why cannot definite descriptions with accentuated predicates and chiselled space-time locators—like 'this red patch at a forty-degree angle to my right' and similar other phrases—be genuine referrers? Russell would argue that such phrases still contain complex expressions as inelegant bulges that make them ambiguous. Whenever there is such a configuration in language, we can very well deny that the configuration actually obtains. That the above expression is complex is obvious from the fact that we can deny the existence of an entity answering to the complex phrase cited above in the case of illusions and hallucinations. With regard to genuinely simple symbols, we cannot deny the existence of their corresponding objects, as they form the very basis of complexes or configurations. In other words, it is only genuinely simple symbols that are able to touch or pick out reality, or are geared to unique referents.

This implies that all definite descriptions, and all ordinary proper names which seem to be reality pickers or referrers, are not so. This view is in sharp contrast to common sense as well as to certain philosophical theories. For example, Frege would

say that to reach out to a referent we need to use a route, a mode or a descriptive bridge through which the referent presents itself. So Frege's claim comes up as a descriptivist theory of reference, while Russell is a non-descriptivist. Now, Russell suggested that while one may claim 'This' and 'That' to be the sole examples of genuine referrers, one needs to note that as soon as we reduce 'This' or 'That' to 'Thisness' or 'Thatness'—as claims to a unique property or a unique quantitative identity or location— they lose their referential status.[4] Properties pertaining to colour, shape, sound, substance, material and even spatio-temporal features or locations, however unique or finely tuned they may be, have an inbuilt configurational character that is necessarily contingent; hence they can never be referred as ultimate reals, but only described.

Russell's view has philosophically unhealthy overtones in so far as the common expressions we intuitively take as genuinely geared to reality are robbed of that status. Definite descriptions and ordinary proper names do not *touch* reality, but are embedded in sentences which can simply *claim or state* (truly or falsely) that they touch reality. For example, 'Enakshi' (my name) does not touch an object, but once embedded in a sentence, it simply says that there is a unique individual answering to this name. Thus, Russell creates a sharp cleavage between the two phenomena—that of touching reality and making a statement to that effect. Reality is glued to genuine referrers, but not to claims about reference, even when the claim is true. This philosophical obstinacy detracts from the value and reliability of ordinary language. However, Russell's theory can be seen to have a salubrious impact in so far as expressions which pose as referents, but actually are not, are effectively exposed as making false claims of touching reality. For example, the verdict of the Allahabad Court on the Ramjanmabhoomi–Babri Masjid issue bristled with a lot of these pretended referrers or reality

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[4] This was suggested in Russell, *Philosophy of Logical Atomism*, Lecture II.

pickers—'the divine spirit of the place', 'the picture of Ramlala', etc. These kinds of language usage give us occasion to ponder whether rigorous analytic discipline can have a therapeutic use in the socio-political sphere and in everyday life.

2. Strawson on Referring: Referring versus Attributive Use of Definite Descriptions

Strawson held that Russell was mistaken in the very ideal of language having the capacity to be chiselled down into some expressions that would automatically be geared to reality without any human use or engagement.[5] For Strawson, even when the object is right in front of me, I have the option of putting or *not* putting it to a referring use. He argues that there is no fundamental difference between reference and description in terms of either language or ontology. The popular observation of Strawson with which we started—the claim that the distinction between reference and description is non-fundamental and use-centric—impresses us with new conviction when we take the following two sets of examples:

(a) 1. Catch him.
    2. I have got a person to translate *Gora*.
    3. The table has *the latest book by Salman Rushdie on it*.
    4. This symphony has to tally with *that*.

(b) 1. Catch *them* young.
    2. He is a regular *Sherlock Holmes*.
    3. A prize will be awarded to the *student who gets more than 80% in the M.A. exams*.
    4. You can never catch the *I*.

In set A, the italicised expressions are put to a referring

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[5] I have relied on Strawson's 'On Referring' for the first phase of my exposition of his view.

use (though they are all in the grammatical predicate position), whereas in set B, though they are typically referring expressions, they describe, they do not refer.

Let us look into the manner in which Strawson enunciates the exact distinctions between the referring and descriptive (or rather attributive) use of a unique expression. The necessary condition for a referring use is that the speaker *presupposes* the unique existence of the object, and does not make a statement that the reference is made. However, this is not sufficient for correct referring, for reference may fail due to *false* presupposition. For *correct* referring use, 'the thing should be in a certain relation to the speaker and the context of utterance'. Strawson elaborates: '[B]y context I mean, at least, the time, the place, the situation, the identity of the speaker, the subjects which form the immediate focus of interest, and the personal histories of both the speaker and those he is addressing.'[6] This contextual fulfilment is *shown*, *signalled*, never *stated*. On the other hand, for a correct attributive use, none of these contextual conditions is required. What is required is simply that there is an object as an instantiation of the concept stated, i.e., as having characteristics matching the descriptive content of the expression. It is thus evident that Strawson's account of the attributive use of definite description coincides with Russell's analysis of the same.

Pending a decision regarding the all-important question of whether Strawson is a descriptivist or a non-descriptivist, let us try to thresh out Strawson's suggestions about the contextual conditions of referring use.

(a) *The thing is to be in a certain relation to the speaker* (i.e., in the limiting case, the thing should be identical with the speaker where the speaker is referring to himself).

(b) *The thing is to be in a certain relation with the time and space of the speaker*. This means that a single spatio-temporal framework, based on public and calibratable

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[6] Ibid., section 4.

units of measuring space and time—viz., calendars, clocks, almanacs, etc.—has to be shared by the speaker and the hearer. Even a person who for some reason has been delinked from the common coordinates of space and time (like Rip Van Winkle) can refer to proximate space-time locations, though he will not be able to make past historical references or futuristic ones. Or rather, he will be able to make typically egocentric references with phrases like 'the object lying beside me', or give commands like 'bring me food after two hours', though he will be unable to situate those spatio-temporal predicates within the wider framework of the standard calendar or the globe. But what is important to appreciate is that an attributive use does not require any such relation to the space-time of the speaker. A full-fledged attributive use is delinked from any space-time location—whether public or perspectival.

(c) *The thing is to be in a certain relation (other than identity) with the identity of the speaker*. That is, if the speaker is not referring to herself, then at least the referent is in some way to be put in direct or indirect relation with the identity of the speaker. When a scientist is discoursing on gold, in so far as she is simply talking about possible instantiations of the concept of gold, she is not referring to it. Hence, there is no question of situating gold in a shared framework of space and time where the location of that piece of gold, or even a class of gold pieces, is linked to that of the speaker. Referring also involves the unique personal features of the speaker, her physical characteristics, the fact of her physically pointing to the thing—all of which have no relevance in cases of attributive use.

(d) Similar remarks would apply to the *situation of the speaker*. 'Situation' would mean a broader notion than space-time location or physical identity. It includes the speaker's social and professional circumstances and status which are inescapably woven into his referring activity. In making references to remotely past objects, the subjects which form

the immediate focus of interest become very handy. Apart from deploying the common space-time indicators (either in a public or a perspectival way), the speaker has to link the referent to the topic of immediate interest as a platform to take off—i.e., as a launch pad to embark on that journey into the remote past or the remote future.

(e) *There has to be a shared epistemological history between the speaker and the hearer*—a shared series of cognitions that are similar in terms of the content and the order in which they occur, and are availed as the common frame of reference, or as devices that can be used as a link up to the referent.

To repeat, none of these contextual features would figure in an attributive use. What is required for a correct attributive use of a uniquely referring expression is that a unique thing should exist (at least hypothetically) as being of a certain class or as instantiating the relevant property embodied in the expression. When one speaks of a possible unique instantiation of a concept in a definite space-time location, then one is not referring to the unique instance, but to the space-time location itself. And one can indeed say that unique space-time indicators too can be put to an attributive use.

We can now go back and reinstate these points of distinction with the previous examples of sets A and B. To consider the attributive uses of set B first: In sentence 1, the speaker gives an instruction to send out a message that would impress a group of young people with a certain mental makeup, irrespective of whether such a group of people really exists or not. The speaker does not assume the existence of such people, hence the question of relating them to a common space-time milieu or within an ongoing history shared with his hearers does not arise. Similar considerations should allow us to see why the underlined expressions in sentences 2 and 3 of set B do not make a referring use: they simply make hypothetical claims about a property being instantiated, say the property of I-ness in 3, where the

said property is not related to the space, time and identity of the speaker. On the other hand, all the underlined expressions in set A do assume the unique existence of the relevant objects— as existing in a common framework of spatial location and temporal history with shared knowledge and focus of interest.[7] In an incorrect referring use, there is no object that is related to the context, though the speaker presupposes it to be so. In the attributive use too, the speaker and hearer do share a common space-time framework—or at least one that can be calibrated into common units of measurement—but the speaker does not, or has no obligation to, chalk out the context.

What happens when the speaker and the hearer do not share a common framework of space-time? Such situations are extremely difficult to conceive, and at this point we can only give some brief indications of certain examples that are developed in more detail on a later occasion. First, we can conceive of a 'Flatlander' hypothesis, where organisms living on a plane with a minimal depth have a strange perception of space. They see objects only at edges and peripheries, without registering their

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[7] Several options of combining referring and attributive uses come up within Strawson's scheme. First, it seems that one can use an existential statement with a definite description with unique space-time indicators, which can be put to either a referring or a descriptive use. The referring use would be illustrated in a context where, say, a criminal investigator makes a dramatically revealing statement: 'The murderer of Mr Smith is here in this room.' Or take the statement: 'The murderer of Mr Smith exists and exists in this room.' The first conjunct of the latter statement perhaps makes an attributive use, while the second makes a referring use. Second, one can even use an existential statement with a definite description and put it to *both* a referring and a descriptive use. 'The murderer of Mr Smith exists in this room' is a case in point. The user does not only need to relate the thing to the context (in the ways prescribed by Strawson), but also has to ensure that the thing does have the relevant property of murdering Mr Smith. (Strawson makes the mistake of supposing that a definite description that holds the subject-position attains the status of a referring expression—the point that Donnellan attacks.)

shape, volume or curvature. Any three-dimensional object that passes through this plane will be seen only as disconnected fragments. Perhaps we can conceive, in the same vein, how our three- or four-dimensional perception of objects might be only truncated slices of higher-dimensional perceptions (see chapter III, section 3). On the other hand, there are deviant perceptions of space that are made readily available to us by the devices of technology. Subjects made to wear specially contrived lenses are reported to see a meaningless blur of movements and colours, impressions of atomic explosions in the background of dark, familiar forms dissolving and reintegrating in unexpected ways. None of these perceptions can be integrated in a broader framework—either the normal or even a deviant one. With these subjects, we will not be able to share either referring uses or attributive uses of referring expressions.

2.1 *Strawson's Treatment of Indefinite Descriptions*

Strawson's approach to indefinite descriptions has some special points to be reckoned with, but apart from that it can be considered to be a natural extension of his theory of contextual *cum* attributive uses. Evidently, the same phrase, e.g., 'a man', can be put successively to a referring as well as an attributive use—as in, '*A man* fell over the cliff,' and 'The teacher asked the students to conceive *a man* as an instantiation of the concept of man.' There are two special features that would set apart the referring use of an indefinite description from the definite descriptions. First, an indefinite description sets up the background for subsequent identification by a definite one; and second, an indefinite description is often deliberately used instead of a definite one when the speaker seeks to hide the identity of the referent from the hearer. When an inspector of the census department visits our home for the first time, we use an indefinite description of the form 'an inspector of census 2015' to set the slot of identification for our hearers, after which we can use the definite article 'the' to refer to the same inspector. In the second case, provided a slot for identification

is already available with the hearers, the speaker would use the indefinite article 'a', say 'an inspector of census 2015', if she wishes to keep the identity of the inspector under cover. Apart from these special features, an indefinite description too can be used referringly with the same level of success as definite ones, provided the speaker activates the contextual tools of space, time, her own identity, immediate focus of interest, etc.

2.2 *Strawson's Account of the Internal Differences among Referring Expressions*

Strawson offers an illuminating account of how the four classes of uniquely referring expressions are internally differentiated according to different principles of division. First, going by *the principle of degree of dependence on the context*, indexicals and demonstratives have the maximum dependence—for the things referred to by 'I', 'this', 'that', 'it' are related to the space-time or identity of the speaker. Personal pronouns like 'he' and 'she' enjoy an intermediate position, for while they need not be in the vicinity of the speaker, a referring function using these expressions must start off from the present space-time framework, and navigate through the routes of the immediate focus of interest to remote places and times. With regard to referring by definite descriptions—like 'the author of Waverley' and 'the king of France of the eighteenth century', and even descriptions with the most contemporary markers—though they must take off from present referring devices, the fact that they are the least dependent on the context entails their constructing a longer route in creating a more expansive backdrop of interrelated referrals.

Uniquely referring expressions can again be differentiated according to their *degree of descriptive content*. Strawson holds that there are 'pure names' that have a zero degree of descriptive content, or at least they do not have any content conferred on them by lexical conventions, and they perform their descriptive function only through ad hoc conventions. Names like 'Horace', which can refer to a boy, a motorcycle or a dog, would fall under

this first category. Personal pronouns like 'he' and 'she' would be invested with a higher degree of descriptive content—a degree which steadily increases with definite descriptions with a capital letter and within quotes—like 'the Round Table', 'Taj Mahal', 'Chinese Restaurant', etc. These phrases exhibit a remarkable dynamism in their referring function, which might have at one point of time been faithfully geared to their descriptive content. However, with the passage of time, they are often prone to shed off some of their content or add yet new content to their referring function, which is not inscribed in their body. The historical round table conference might not have used a table that is round; Taj Mahal will still be called 'Taj Mahal', even with the dramatically counterfactual revelation that it was never built in memory of Mumtaz Mahal and does not contain her grave; there is a restaurant in Delhi's Connaught Place which has stopped serving Chinese food and yet boldly bears that name.

Strawson calls these 'impure proper names' or 'embryonic names', for they have the potentiality to pass into the status of pure names resting only on ad hoc conventions. This usually happens when one member of some class of events or things or people becomes an object of outstanding interest in a certain society, thus emancipating itself from the general features and taking on purely specific or ad hoc modes of identification. And Strawson is ready to confer a dynamic autonomy to definitive phrases—the autonomy not only of passing *into* the status of pure names, but also *out* of it. In the first case, a definite description with small letters would pass into a definite description with capital letters, while in the latter case the reverse operation would occur.

Thus, uniquely referring expressions display another mode of internal variation depending on whether the *conventions determining reference are general lexical conventions or ad hoc conventions*. The referring functions of substantive descriptive phrases like 'the author of Waverley' would be guided by the general conventions, the pronouns and the definite descriptions with capital letters and in quotes—like 'the old pretender' would

be guided by a mixture of ad hoc and general conventions. Indeed, a person has to indulge in an old habit of pretentious exercise in order to be referred to by this phrase, but which old pretender is intended by the phrase is to be decided by the ad hoc conventions or the context. Similar remarks would perhaps apply to personal pronouns like 'he', 'she' and 'I', for their very token reflexive character forges them as mixtures of ad hoc and general conventions. On the other hand, proper names (whether Indian or Western—'Mary', 'John' or 'Enakshi'—whether they have a descriptive content or not) obviously do not refer by general lexical conventions, but rather by ad hoc conventions formulated along with the specific act of baptism.

It is the internal variations within uniquely referring expressions, their contrastive juxtapositions and variations in gradually ascending or descending degrees, that need to be projected in order to dispel the myth of this illusion of reference—the act of pinning down with the extensionless point of a needle. We shall see that Strawson's procedure of laying out this contrastive interplay matches, to a certain extent, with that of Wittgenstein, who on many occasions suggests that progressive contrasts in gradually ascending levels do not point to an ontologically final limit, any more than the degrees of adjectives—positive, comparative and superlative (sweet, sweeter and sweetest)—take us to an optimum level of sweetness. The phrases 'absolute velocity' versus 'relative velocity' make sense only through the strategic constructions of ascending levels of space, where each level can, so to speak, keep a track on the velocities of the planets in the immediately preceding level. But to whatever extent we may carry these progressive degrees of construction, we shall never bump against the limit of space.

Similarly, when Strawson lays out the dynamic contrasts within the uniquely referring expressions—some having more descriptive content, some less, some shifting their descriptive content on different occasions, some keeping it stable, some being more dependent on the context and some less—what he suggests is that Russell was swayed by the descending degrees

of these descriptive contents and the ascending degrees of context-dependence. He was thus led to posit a limit where the descriptive content would be zero, and the unique context or the non-repeatable reality related to the name in an ad hoc way itself would take the place of descriptive meaning. But just as levels of space do not take us to the end of space, these internal dynamics *within* the referring expressions too do not take us to the extensionless reality.

Strawson does seem to identify and diagnose this obsessive quest for a mythical reference among philosophers at various junctures of history—the quest for an abiding identity underlying the variant properties—that makes adjectives unsuitable for reference and temporarily foists this burden on the nouns. But as we found with Locke, this allotment too turns out to be unsatisfactory, and substance—the ultimate referent—eludes all tools of language, it recedes beyond properties, i.e., shape, size or colour, it recedes beyond motion, figure and even extension— 'something I know not what'. With both Locke and Russell, reference becomes an occult function, which is progressively withdrawn from the usual tools of language, and ultimately even from the indexicals and demonstratives. As we shall see in the course of our journey, especially in the fourth and fifth chapters, all foundational theories of reference are ultimately grafted on a bare space-time container, which forever spills out of the ordinary objects around us, as their ethereal husk. The question is to what extent Strawson's pragmatic orientation, with impressive tools for resisting bare particulars lying out there, can resist the space-time containment model of reference. Strawson does seem to admit the reality constraint as determining the varied dynamics of uses—viz., how much semantic content is to depend on contexts, how much it is to shed, how much more it is ready to attain afresh. The guiding principle underneath all referring uses is that the thing has to be related to the space, time or identity of the speaker. It seems Strawson too is labouring under a traditional model according to which the referrer, his body, the referent and the act of indexing to it serve as fillers for an abstract

space-time-scheme ready with empty slots. It is this space-time boundary that determines to what extent the descriptive content is to be shed, to what degree it is to be added. The context itself cannot be *constructed* for Strawson—it perhaps underlies all constructions.

Besides the Strawsonian options of depletion or inflation of the descriptive content, shifting it or keeping it stable does not seem to be sensitive to the phenomenon of internal rupture of descriptions. For Strawson, the reality requirement cannot be dispensed with, nor can the mobility of the speaker in her active employment of the bridge between herself and the referent. Unlike the descriptivist, he does not think that the bridge is self-adhesive, or that it has a saturated content that will magnetically glue the speaker to the referent. Nor would he think, like the non-descriptivist, that the existence of the referent is itself sufficient and allows the speaker to abandon all bridges and be grounded on the object itself. Swerving away from both the descriptivist and non-descriptivist options does not, however, take Strawson to the radically Wittgensteinian position where space-time itself is created in and through our referring activities. For Strawson, the user exercises his autonomy—of choosing the attributive use over the referring one, shedding off or adding some new content, prioritising the ad hoc conventions over the general ones, privileging the full-bodied presence of the context over a more expansively thinned-out panorama of reference—all within a pre-given conceptual scheme of space-time identifiers and a repertoire of individuals and properties. As already noted, there is a common space-time scheme (ruling out all deviant modes of space-time perception) that is already laid out. Indeed, Strawson is quite sensitive to the fact that the Russellian theory of reference, pretending to cash out reference in terms of descriptions (like 'the existence of a unique individual who is conventionally referred to'[8]), ends up presupposing the reference itself. But Strawson himself, when he speaks of the object being needed to be related to the context, or of one thing

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[8] Strawson, 'On Referring', section 4, p. 288.

or event gaining importance in a society, so as to need an ad hoc reference, also seems to take the unity of a referable item of reality being already out there, from which the options of referring use are to take off. Strawson's philosophy—the way the referents may be said to be inscribed in the scheme—would not allow him to make the radical concession that the scheme itself is merely an architectonic one, fleshed out through the uses. We shall have more to say on this with respect to Strawson's account of reference and presupposition as laid out in his *Individuals* in the Appendix.[9]

3. 'What's in a Name?'

This section offers some digressive relief before we go on with our scheduled journey. To say that whatever be the name by which a thing is called would be the same thing, not anything lesser, is already to have a referable and nameable slot ready for it, and thus in a way one has already named it. Two strains of thought ran in Juliet's mind. On the one hand, she wished that the names 'Romeo' and 'Montague' be emancipated from their descriptive content—a content that was neither lexical nor conventional (in an ad hoc sense), but conferred on the strength of a longstanding convention carried on as a historical tradition. Juliet wished that both these names would deplete into an insignificant ad hoc convention so that they might be readily replaced by another equally insignificant and dispensable convention. Let the rose be named 'hibiscus', so that it may be seen to carry on with the same essence of smell, let 'Romeo' be called by any other amalgamation of noises, so that Romeo might still be seen to 'retain that dear perfection which he owes without that title'. Thus, by making the name dispensable, both Romeo and Juliet had recognised the descriptive load of the name through its denial. Otherwise, Juliet would not at the same time have called out, 'Deny thy father and refuse thy name,' or 'Romeo doff thy name and for that name which is no part of thee.' Nor would Romeo have wished to be baptised anew by Juliet with a new name—

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[9] Strawson, *Individuals*.

with a new descriptive content. 'Call me my love, and I'll be new baptized, Henceforth I never will be Romeo.'[10] So both Romeo and Juliet, by way of denying any content to the names 'Romeo' and 'Montague', are smarting under the undeniable pressure of the names—names which are dispensable, but dispensable with great emotional strain, not simply by the dispassionate thought experiment typically stylised by the analytic tradition. Though their pondering on names apparently started with an effort to deflate the descriptive loads of these names, it ended up with another kind of inflationary exercise, which sought to invest the individual slots with a new and alternatively loaded descriptive content.

Such trends of thought were recently noticed when Hemant Godse, a member of the Shiv Sena party, appealed to have the name 'Godse' removed from the list of unparliamentary words. This rule had been implemented way back in 1956, when two Hindu Mahasabha members were found to have elevated Gandhi's assassin to the position of a godhead. Now, none of the contending parties involved in this scenario was interested in regarding the name 'Godse' as a pure proper name (neutralised to colourless, ad hoc conventions), nor as an embryonic name. While one party strived to load it with a venerable burden, the other sought to combat that effort with the opposite set of predicates. Hemant Godse, with his apparent effort of neutralising the rhetorics of the name, is virtually appealing for it to take on a new realm of appropriate predicates befitting his own lineage.[11]

4. The Russell–Strawson–Donnellan Conundrum

We can use a physical analogy to bring out the distinction between Russell, Strawson and Donnellan, among whom Frege too can be appropriately incorporated. For Frege, the referring

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[10] William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Act II, Scene II.

[11] Raghvendra Rao, '"Godse" expunged, Hemant Godse, Sena MP, asks what about me?', *Indian Express*, 14 March 2015.

expression goes to the referent *via* a mould or a bridge which has a configurational content that matches up with that of the referent. The referrer and the referent are linked up by virtue of a common pattern that they share, though this pattern (sense) projects itself as a *third something* in an ethereal third realm—the transparent and self-interpretive content of the pattern acts as an adhesive pasting together the referrer and the referent. One does not have to *use* this pattern of the mould to stick together the referrer and the referent; once the mould is present, its absolute self-explanatory character compels a passive apprehension on the part of language users, automatically procuring the required reference.

With Russell, reference does not occur through the pattern of moulds, for neither the referrer nor the referent has any extendable dimension that lends itself to a configurational content. For Russell, referrers are like extensionless points of a needle which do not even stand in need of being pushed into objects, but the objects or referents come already stuck to the needles. Now for Strawson, the content of the referrer and the referent varies in its dimensions—from the heavily loaded design of a richly intricate mould to the depleted content of a thinned-down needle (i.e., from the loaded standard semantic content of complex definite descriptions to the gradual depletion in the shape of ad hoc conventions or a progressively increasing dependence on context). But whatever might be the nature of the referrer or the referent—whether it is the thinned-down body of the needle or the loaded substance of the mould—the user has to push the needle into the object or match up the common configuration shared by the referrer with the referent in terms of the mould. But Donnellan[12] insists that in spite of his professed pragmatic orientation, Strawson could not give his referring usage the required autonomy of breaking free from the semantic and syntactic content of the referring expression. Donnellan

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[12] Keith Donnellan, 'Reference and Definite Descriptions', in A. P. Martinich (ed.), *Philosophy of Language* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), vol. III, pp. 50–66.

observed that Strawson's conception of words as tools is limited by the supposition that a tool, even though lying inert, can do the job.[13]

I choose to push this observation further so that this physical analogy of the tool and mould can be articulated and utilised to the maximal extent. We can read Donnellan as implying that according to Strawson, the shape, size, material content, topology as well as the passive placement of the tool constrains the user to use it in the way he does. It is this mindset that persuaded Strawson to claim that if a definite description (or for that matter any other referring expression) is in the subject-position of a sentence, it must (by the sheer dint of its placement) perform the referring function and not the attributive one. Again, it is this shortsighted commitment to the inherent material features of the tool (and not its active employment in a dynamic interaction with other tools) that restricts Strawson to the position of a descriptivist— where the referring expression can at most have the mobility of adding and shedding its descriptive content through a process in time, or of swinging from one principle of descriptive reference to another, but can never break free of its descriptive content in a radical manner. Hence, Strawson could never allow empty or mismatched descriptions as achieving reference.

We can try to appreciate Donnellan's point again by accentuating the nuances of his tool analogy. We can mobilise the needle in a way that it breaks forth from its thin vertical enclosure to scoop up objects that do not at all tally with its shape or size. Thus, we can attach the needle with other gadgets so that it rotates in a circular fashion to displace and thereby carve out a flat disc-shaped object, or we can bend the needle into an L-shape with the help of other tools so that it can haul up an L-shaped object itself. If tools can go beyond their physical restrictions to achieve the apparently unachievable, words too can catch hold of their referents, even though they might be empty or inappropriate, by the strength of being activated in

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[13] Ibid., p. 51.

a wider context of usage in an enriched backdrop. Let us recall Donnellan's examples—we can pick out Jones in the courtroom by the inappropriate description of 'the murderer of Smith', we can pick out a rock by a widely divergent description like 'the man carrying an umbrella', provided there is a real thing out there that the speaker intends to pick out.[14]

Further, Donnellan points out that tools do not only pick out objects through a mechanism that is independent of their physical properties. On the contrary, tools can be utilised in such a manner that it is precisely the material configuration of the tool's content that enables one to pick out the object. The situation would perhaps be like the mechanism through which an artist making a graphic paint etches with acid on a metal plate and takes its impression onto a canvas. If the entire mechanism of acid etching is seen as a tool, this tool is not operating to clasp or cut out something, but delineating the configuration of the object by virtue of its own configuration. If Strawson appreciated that tools can be used as a device for picking out objects by *delineating them through their physical shape and qualities*, then he would have also appreciated that definite descriptions (and, for that matter, other referring expressions) can have an attributive use even though placed in the subject-position of the sentence. Further, in that case, Strawson would have further realised that the so-called attributive use of referring expressions too involves a weak reference that embodies a *presupposition* of there being one or another unique individual answering to the description—in default of which the sentence would be devoid of truth-value.[15]

This physical analogy can be effectively deployed to highlight Wittgenstein's originality on the issue of reference vis-à-vis the other standard positions. All these theories work with the basic presupposition that the referent is lying out there as an immaculate object with a neat spatio-temporal outline. It is on

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[14] Ibid., pp. 59–60.

[15] This is what Donnellan had been insisting all through his paper, with a more pointed specification at the end of section III.

this outline that the different descriptional options are projected, and it is with respect to this given hunk that it makes sense to speak of the different alternative devices of reference—whether it is of the nature of a mould or the extensionless point of a needle, whether it works by the sheer power of its isolated and exclusive identity, or by an interactive mobility with other devices in a more expansive background. Frege's talk of sense as the route to reference falls back on a given spatio-temporal enclosure that is to be reached through a path. Russell had explicitly characterised referents as sense-data situated in private spaces (that stand in further need of being integrated in the overarching scheme of public space-time).[16] As for Strawson, he definitely implies that many of the prevalent doctrines, like that of Locke, are labouring under the spatial containment model of reference. Locke progressively dismissed all linguistic expressions—from adjectives to noun-phrases—as being unsuitable for reference, as he gradually grew dissatisfied not only with colour, shape and size, but also with figure, motion and extension as being the proper candidate for the status of substance. In the process, he seemed to glide towards the referent as being laid under extension, as an ethereal, incorporeal slot for the corporealisation of concrete material qualities to take place—an occult something to be captured by an equally occult act of reference. It was this ideal that was voiced in his claim that 'substance is that which I know not what.' As Strawson pointed out, one might as well put the term 'referent' in the place of 'substance'. However we cannot take Strawson's view as a resistance against the spatial containment model of reference, for Strawson himself, while defining the contextual conditions of reference in terms of space and time, chose not to problematise these notions themselves.

It seems that Strawson and Wittgenstein differ in their basic approach to the notion of conceptual scheme or grammar—notions that play a vital role in reference. Strawson seems to suggest that reference falls back on a prior identification—for

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[16] Russell's account of sense-data and space and time vis-à-vis Wittgenstein's view on this matter will be fully treated in chapter V.

how can one presuppose the unique existence of an object answering to the description, or how can one be meaningfully said to relate the referent to the context, unless she has already picked it out as distinct from other objects? And a common mode of identification that can be shared between the speaker and hearer is that they must share the same coordinates of space and time—i.e., taking off from the same 'here' and 'now'. A different concept of space and time, or a different mode of cutting out the space-time outlines of objects, cannot be available for a communicable identification. Here it is not clear whether the conceptual scheme underlying our mode of spatio-temporal identification of objects consists in a unique structure of empty space-time slots waiting for objects and events to be filled in. Strawson also states that the conceptual scheme that we use has particulars and universals in its inventory,[17] and if pressed further he would also concede this scheme of ours to incorporate what we might term as grammatical categories, like colour, shape, number, position, direction, etc. Now, as we shall see through the course of this work, Wittgenstein's critique of the Augustinian model of reference clearly shows the inherent failure of any putative scheme or empty scaffold in predetermining a unique way of filling them up, without falling into the old spatial containment model of reference. The talk of conceptual scheme or grammatical categories—comprising space, time, individuals, particulars, colour, number, etc.—can only serve as architectonic starting points; they do not foreshadow, but themselves fill out, bit by bit, through the interactive games of reference and description.

Donnellan too seems to navigate his theory of reference under the pressure of the spatial containment model, perhaps betrayed in a more explicit way in his closing comment: '… in the referential use as opposed to the attributive, there is a *right* thing to be picked out by the audience and its being the right thing is not simply a function of its fitting the description.'[18] By

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[17] Strawson, *Individuals*, chapter I.

[18] Donnellan, 'Reference and Definite Descriptions', p. 65.

the 'right thing', Donnellan might have meant the one intended by the speaker, which, if not a function of description, would demand an enquiry into the ontology of intention itself—a tortuous field bristling with patent philosophical polemics. Parallelly, he too seems to be labouring under the mistaken assumption of there being a real thing in the shape of a bare spatio-temporal outline allowing shifting descriptions and yet sustaining its referential identity. And this supposition makes Donnellan think that while one can tamper with descriptions keeping the referential identity intact, one cannot do so with the descriptions, where one has to fall back on the very *essence* of the descriptions. Following Wittgenstein, I seek to show that the so-called referential identity is simply a strategic introduction, putting up the stance of a non-relational and isolated identity, which actually gets cast and recast anew with every description.

And just as there is no referential identity underlying alternative descriptions, there is no essential identity of attributes underlying the descriptive or conceptual connections claimed in the attributive use of definite descriptions. The relation between reference and description is not the relation between a bare identity clothed with alternative dressings (some matching and others non-matching), but is rather a relational tension between the relatively simple and the relatively complex—and this tension obtains within the attributive discourse as well, where the starting point of an apparently isolated and independent identity comes up as a formal background to allow alternative oscillations. We know that for Donnellan, it is an 'indefinite' individual, i.e., an individual without a specified spatio-temporal location, yet embodying the attribute placed in the subject-position of the definite descriptions, that is presupposed or referred to in attributive uses of definite description. But if we appreciate the formal or architectonic character of the ground of the referential use, we can likewise appreciate that this putative attributive identity too is a formal projection that will be shaped anew with alternative modifications.

The point may be clarified with the help of the examples that were used by Donnellan himself:

(a) The person over there is drinking a martini.
(b) Her husband is kind to her.
(c) Bring the book kept on the prize table.

Just as a rock can be picked out using a wildly inappropriate description such as 'the professor of history carrying an umbrella', similarly, the instance of two transvestite men—the first dressing as a man and the second as a woman who is actually gay, and is *kind* partner of the former—can very well serve for a correct attributive use of sentence (b). Similarly, a *robot* programmed to drink champagne (as a protest against the teetotallers' organisation) and a *Kindle reader* kept on the prize desk can be valid embodiments of the acclaimed attributive connexions in (a) and (c). Moreover, Donnellan's analysis of the attributive use of definite descriptions does not address the phenomenon of indeterminacy of meaning, whereby kindness glides into one-sided pity, or a table glides into a dwarf bed while the martini shades off into other kinds of drinks. All this perhaps shows that Donnellan is just trying to project an apparently adventurous autonomy of the referential use, professing a pragmatic orientation in the philosophy of language—a programme which, in spite of its promises, falls back on uninspiring philosophical myths like the spatial containment model of reference, the semantic determinacy of descriptions, and the transparency of the speaker's intention. A theory of reference cannot make effective headway without a satisfactory treatment of these issues.

5. Construing Strawson's Reply to Russell's 'Mr. Strawson on Referring'

Explicating the details of the Russell/Strawson/Donnellan controversy prepares the way for evaluating the counterarguments

that Russell levelled at Strawson.[19] I shall attempt to show that an honest exercise in constructing Strawson's reply to Russell would oblige Strawson to take a Wittgensteinian direction of radical anti-foundationalism.

Russell's attack principally takes off from two (or rather three) registers:

(a) Strawson's profession of the celebrated distinctions between reference, meaning and use—whereby he claims to destabilise the essentially existential or attributive character of definite descriptions—pertains only to what Russell calls 'ego-centric' expressions like 'present', 'I', 'you', 'yesterday', 'today', tomorrow'.[20] (We can reasonably take Russell's egocentric expressions as covering the range of indexicals and demonstratives.) Here, Russell explains that the distinction between egocentric and non-egocentric expressions lies in the fact that, while in the case of the latter there is something constant about the object indicated, for the former what is constant is not the object denoted, but its relation to the particular use of the word. Whenever these words, like 'I', 'you', etc., are used, the user is attending to something, and the word indicates this something. This something of course changes according to variant contexts and variant users; what remains constant is the speaker's attention to these variant 'something's. With non-egocentric words there is no need to distinguish between the constancy of meaning and the varying occasions of use of the word. Russell states that this fine-tuned distinction between egocentric and non-egocentric expressions, as informing the distinction between reference and meaning, has been adequately treated of by himself, and need not have been projected by Strawson as an original doctrine serving to remedy Russell's

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[19] Bertrand Russell, 'Mr. Strawson on Referring', in R. R. Ammerman (ed.), *Classics of Analytic Philosophy* (Bombay: Tata McGraw-Hill, 1965), pp. 335–39.

[20] Ibid., p. 336.

pitfalls. What the presence of these egocentric expressions in definite descriptions achieves is not a dismissal of their existential or attributive character; their presence would only urge the need to remove or rather replace them for non-egocentric expressions. Thus, descriptions like 'the present king of France', or 'the police-inspector I met yesterday', should be respectively rephrased as 'the king of France in 1905' and 'the police-inspector Enakshi Mitra met on the 12th of April 2015'. In that case, the strenuous exercise of decoupling the denotation of a word and the various occasions of its use, meaning and truth-value, meaning and reference, would not even have got off the ground, and Strawson's efforts to activate a referential function of the empty definite descriptions (and for that matter all definite descriptions) would not have carried the impression of a valid project. Once the phrases with egocentric expression are neutralised in the manner indicated, their existential or attributive character will clearly be seen to be essentially embedded in them. It is the philosopher's task to remove all egocentric expressions from the account of our experience, and flatten these expressions into definite descriptions—thus rendering them experience-neutral. So long as this is not done, the illusion of the split between truth-value and meaning, and the possibility of a referential use of definite descriptions, will persist as a pretentious and misleading promise.

(b) Russell argues that the very fact that Strawson chooses only definite descriptions with egocentric expressions as his preferred set of examples, shoving the others to the periphery, shows that he is motivated to obfuscate the inherently attributive and existential status of those definite descriptions. He asks Strawson to demonstrate the referential use of definite descriptions like 'The square root of –1 is ½ the square root of –4,' or 'The cube of 3 is the integer immediately preceding the 2nd perfect number.'

(c) Russell insists that just as the definite descriptions of our language have an existential character built into them (an inherent character that nevertheless stands in need of powerful tools of analysis to be revealed), similarly there are certain expressions in our language, like 'red', 'hard', 'cold', etc., which have bits of reality, i.e., their respective referents, pierced into them as their meaning. In other words, in these expressions, reference and meaning collapse into each other. However much we may try to thresh out these paradigmatically referring expressions, say 'red', in terms of definite descriptions—like 'the colour that you would feel was emitted by light of the highest wavelength', or 'the colour of this poker which you would see if you could see' (the latter being instructions passed on to a blind man after placing him near a red-hot poker)—the ultimate residues of these phrases are genuine referrers. And here Russell says: 'I defy Mr. Strawson to give the usual meaning to the word "red" unless there is something which the word designates.' So, in fine, Russell says that there are two exclusive sets of expressions, each invested with the exclusive power of description versus reference and vice versa, which cannot be glossed over by a strained exercise of optional oscillation between two kinds of uses.

What we can say on Strawson's behalf with respect to the first objection is obvious enough. Strawson's programme is to show that this split between meaning and use pertains to all expressions—i.e., both the egocentric and non-egocentric ones. Of course, if egocentric expressions in a definite description are substituted by non-egocentric expressions (as 'present' is substituted with 'in 1905'), or if the original definite description is a neutral characterisation of a number, then Strawson cannot argue in the same vein that Russell confuses an expression with a use of an expression. But though a non-egocentric expression cannot be said to refer to different individuals on different occasions, the question whether it is put to a referring use or an

attributive one would still be valid. Indeed, Strawson had rightly pointed out that we cannot undertake the task of turning all egocentric expressions into non-egocentric ones unless we had already used the latter referringly, so that we can now revert the presupposed slots and contexts of reference into the flattened content of definite descriptions.[21]

Further, Strawson has resourcefully argued how the referential function of uniquely referring expressions (including egocentric expressions or indexicals and demonstratives which form a substantial section of the entire class of such expressions) has been constantly obliterated by the philosopher's zeal for constructing definitions and logical systems, where these expressions have been reduced to variables. On Strawson's behalf, we can now claim that it is their zeal for definitions and the ideal of a system and not any inbuilt character of egocentric expressions that goads philosophers to replace the referential function of egocentric expressions with attributive functions. And indeed, on the other hand, Strawson has also experimented with the possibility of replacing all indexicals and proper names with appropriate sets of definite descriptions; he has imagined a community whose language does not have any proper names or personal pronouns, but only a series of definite descriptions— pertaining perhaps to the unique fingerprint, a unique Aadhaar number, or to the origin from unique gametes (in the style of Kripke)—that are available for referring. Here, replacing the egocentric expressions with non-egocentric expressions would not rob them of their referential function.

The strength of Russell's objections pertains specially to those definite descriptions invested with number-words where

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[21] This is clearly suggested by the following parenthetic observation: 'The limit of absurdity and obvious circularity is reached in the attempt to treat names as disguised descriptions in Russell's sense; for what is in the special sense implied, not entailed, by my now referring to someone by name is simply the existence of someone, *now being referred to, who is conventionally referred to* by that name.' See Strawson, 'On Referring', p. 288.

the conceivability of putting them to a referring use is at stake. Numbers, at least whole numbers like '2', are roughly defined as concepts of concepts having two instantiations, and the same strategy may be extended to fractions, irrational numbers and imaginary numbers. Strawson's suggestion that they can be put to a referring use would imply that the user entertains a presupposition about the unique existence of an individual answering to that description, i.e., of a unique individual (digit) that is the square root of −1. It is not clear from Strawson's analysis, at least in 'On Referring', as to what the truth or falsity of such a presupposition would consist in. Of course he clarifies elsewhere[22] that when sentences with property-names and class-expressions in the subject-positions are used to make statements, these statements are either about the respective instances or members of the classes (viz., the instances or the members being numerous, or few), or are existential statements (either affirmative or negative). Strawson states that we need not be caught up with the scholastic problem of existence being presupposed for the affirmation or negation of existence; we might simply say that the presupposition rule does not apply for the class-statements and property-statements, yet we can very well treat them as subject–predicate statements whose subject-terms perform the referential function (in the innocuous Strawsonian sense of the term). (On the contrary, when we say that all men when put together form the class of men, then the expression 'the class of men' is perhaps put to an attributive use.) Now we can reasonably apply the same treatment to the statements with numerical expressions in the subject-position as cited by Russell. Strawson also provides the alternative solution of treating existential statements about classes and properties (and we would hope that he would allow this to extend to statements with numerical definite descriptions as well) as simply saying that the specific property-names and the class-

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[22] P. F. Strawson, *Introduction to Logical Theory* (Delhi: B.I. Publications, 1976), pp. 191–92.

expressions and their synonyms are significant. That is, to say that 'the class of men exists' is to say that 'the word "man" is significant.'

I venture to suggest that the first solution of ruling out the presupposition requirement for statements with classes, properties or numbers is somewhat arbitrary. I have the following reservations against both these solutions offered by Strawson. To take the first claim that the presupposition relation is operative for singular propositions and not for class-statements is again to hold that our conceptual scheme has neat slots with spatio-temporal boundaries—to take in immaculate individuals—thereby enabling us to identify and presuppose the referents as the necessary background of our referential use. On the other hand, our conceptual schemes do not have required slots for classes, properties and numbers—the latter do not have the required ontology that can be availed of for identification and presupposition. This goes against Strawson's professed move to flatten out the Russellian cleavage (both linguistic and ontological) between reference and description.

The second solution also labours under the discriminatory ontology of putting the immaculate individuals under one realm, and classes and properties in another, an ontology that determines different significations for these two different kinds of statements—one case allowing a presupposition of unique existence, the other case restricting us to a mere statement of meaning. The journey through the forthcoming chapters of this work is designed to convince us that reference does not fall back upon pre-given extensionless bits of reality, nor on a conceptual scaffold that prefigures what are to go in there as presuppositional referents and what are to be left out. It is our uses—the blend of linguistic and non-linguistic activities—that carve out space-time into a mutual interplay of reference and description.

Even within the restricted range of singular propositions, the notion of presupposition would land Strawson in trouble, at least on the following count. If a presupposition is laid out

in the form of a statement, demanding a truth-value, it would again fall back on another presupposition—and the process would continue ad infinitum. Similar philosophical anxieties led Robert Stalnaker[23] to conceive of presuppositions in terms of pragmatic propositional attitudes. And we shall see that it is this insight that is reflected in Wittgenstein's naming–description interplay, where naming is just like putting the pieces on the board before playing any move in the game, or fetching building materials according to the call of the builder. These activities are not true or false; they consist in projecting, or rather carving out, some objects with an apparently independent and non-relational status so that the configurational operations can be performed on them. Naming or reference does not fall back upon any epistemological or metaphysical foundation. We shall see that it is this notion of reference, shorn of the notion of truth-value, that will be adequate to cover spurious references to unicorns, the present king of France, imaginary numbers, or to a broken tool that has lost its cohesive, referential identity *qua* tool and has become completely dysfunctional.[24]

While Russell's objections have some force against spurious or polemical references, he seems to miss Strawson's insight that both egocentric expressions and non-egocentric definite descriptions are equally available for an option between referring versus attributive use; and that this seemingly fundamental distinction can be unpacked in terms of a progressive difference in degree (pertaining to the descriptive content, dependence on context, and ad hoc versus general conventions). Russell does not seem to appreciate that all these definite descriptions, with

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[23] Robert Stalnaker, 'Presuppositions', *Journal of Philosophical Logic*, vol. 2, no. 1 (1973), pp. 447–57.

[24] Wittgenstein tries out these referential functions with names of broken tools in his *Philosophical Investigations* (henceforth *PI*) 41, 42, which I shall discuss in chapter II at length. See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, eds G. E. M. Anscombe, R. Rhees and G. H. Von Wright, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984).

or without egocentric expressions, as well as the egocentric expressions themselves are on an equal footing in so far as all of them admit of a valid referential function, though the modes in which they refer do not differ fundamentally, but in degree. Here, Strawson's theory seems to be an enigmatic mixture of descriptivism (dependence on varying degrees of description) and non-descriptivism (causal dependence on context or reality), which perhaps gives way to descriptivism in the long run, in so far as Strawson would concede semantic content as determining the dependence on context. Here we shall see that Strawson differs from Wittgenstein on both these counts—for the latter, all semantic content and the context are ruptured externally and internally—in terms of uses and activities.

Predictably, Russell finds fault with Strawson's conviction that '[w]e do not, and we cannot, while referring, attain the point of complete explicitness at which the referring function is no longer performed.'[25] Russell claims that there are certain expressions in our vocabulary, viz., determinate colour-words like 'red' and 'blue', whose reference, meaning and referential use collapse into one, which amounts to saying that these words are significant because 'there is something that they mean, and if there were not this something, they would be empty noises....[26] Russell goes on to qualify his claim by adding that even if 'red' is replaced for a blind man by such definite descriptions as 'the colour emitted by light of the highest wavelength', or 'the colour of this hot poker that you would see if you could see', these descriptions would ultimately have to fall back on certain words which must have a direct relation with facts of reality.

Now, Strawson has indeed said that 'red' does not have a clear-cut boundary of usage[27]—a remark that might possibly be developed to imply that red does not come as an absolutely simple pigment, or a non-conceptual stab of experience. But

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[25] Strawson, 'On Referring', p. 283.

[26] Russell, 'Mr. Strawson on Referring', p. 337.

[27] Strawson, *Introduction to Logical Theory*, p. 5.

to build up an elaborate defence against Russell, especially with respect to colour-words, Strawson has to take help from Wittgenstein. Colour-experiences do not come as qualia or non-relational points; rather, each colour-experience is laid out in a relational structure with other associated shades and variations in the illumination of the surrounding. Speaking in Quinean terms, collateral information would modify the putatively given stimulus in intractably different ways. A person who knows that the black and white images seemingly projected on a white screen are actually objects situated behind the screen, would look upon the white screen not as opaque, but as a translucent medium robbing the colour of the objects behind it and turning them into different shades of black and white. When a kettle gets gradually heated up, it first turns red-hot, then brown-hot and finally white-hot, and each of these colours breaks out of its putatively insular status to push and pull at each other in various styles.[28] The growing intensity of the tactile perception of heat might project brown-hot as darker than red-hot, and white-hot as even darker than these two; while the collateral information about the gradual molecular disintegration of the heated object presents white-hot as more spacious and thus lighter than the other two relatively condensed colours. All these instances show that colour-words can be replaced by alternative ranges of definite descriptions, which would indeed oblige Russell to insist that all these descriptional recasts would ultimately have to fall back on pre-given simples. But it would be extremely difficult to sustain the same set of simples across all these modes of descriptions, and Russell would not ultimately be able to preserve the absolute simplicity of colours and the irrevocably referential status of colour-words. Relative simplicity shifting from one mode of conception to another is not sufficient for Russell's theory of non-descriptional reference.

On the whole, a full-fledged resistance to Russell would need to put a stronger premium on usage, not stopping simply

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[28] I present an elaborate account of the enactive perception of colour in chapter V.

with a theory of semantic rules investing meanings in words *before* they can be put to a use. For Wittgenstein, it is not only that meanings get ruptured externally and internally, but the very formulation of rules such as 'the word "p" means objects having x y features by this rule' itself presupposes the meaning of the word 'rule' and the meaning of the complex phrase, 'a rule determining meaning'—a phenomenon that itself cannot be taught by rules.[29] From the way Strawson formulates the tension between the formal semanticist (FS) and the communication-intentionist (CI) theories of meaning,[30] it seems rather doubtful whether Strawson appreciated this point. He argues that rules cannot have efficacy without a desire to make rules achieve their purpose in an audience-directed situation, and hence the FS theory has to acknowledge that the conventional rules of meaning fall back on the notion of pre-conventional communication. But a success in pre-conventional communication, say the success achieved by a red-green colour-blind person meaning 'red' by 'green' (and vice versa), to an audience would throw up the question whether this communication of the speaker, or what we may alternatively term as the utterer's meaning, establishes a different mode of conventional recursion—viz., the same words of the speaker intended to mean the same fact in the same situation. Thus, Strawson argues that the speaker's intention to mean *p* pre-conventionally by the utterance '*x*' has the implicit claim that the utterance type '*x*' conventionally means *p* within a group; and thus the pre-conventional intention would fall back on the utterance type '*x*' conventionally meaning *p* by a token of the type—and thus on conventional semantics.

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[29] Wittgenstein's general observations on rule-following are presented in *PI* 185–242; see especially *PI* 217. See also Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, ed. G. H. Von Wright, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1956), V-45 (henceforth *RFM*).

[30] P. F. Strawson, *Meaning and Truth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), chapter 7.

Here it might be tempting to put Donnellan's account of achieving reference through inappropriate descriptions (either through an acknowledged epistemological lacuna on the part of the speaker or a mutual understanding to use mismatched descriptions) in the class of CI theories. Still, Donnellan's insistence that it is the right kind of *thing* and not *description of it* that achieves reference should debar us from taking any straightforward decision in this regard. However, what concerns us here is Strawson's not appreciating the insight that following semantic rules falls back upon something more basic than idiosyncratic intentions, which in their turn hark back to the operation of rules. Formulating rules in terms of linguistic expressions standing for non-linguistic entities, the application of rules in each instance, cannot fall back upon deviant and non-conventional rules, but is part of a pervasive form of living. Strawson further claims that both the CI theory and the FS theory agree on the point that the sentences of a language are largely determined by the semantic and syntactic rules or conventions of that language. They only differ on the point of whether the general nature of these rules can be understood *only* by reference to the function of communication. Strawson also puts the later Wittgenstein in the genre of CI theories—which provokes us to reiterate Wittgenstein's basic anti-foundationalist insight: a rule serves only as an architectonic starting point that gets fleshed out, bit by bit, through each of its applications, which are a blend of linguistic and non-linguistic activities.[31]

It is in this light that we should handle the ongoing series of objections pitched by Russell in the article under discussion. Russell argues that ordinary language cannot decide either on the structure or the content of reality, and hence cannot determine either syntax or semantics—just as our ordinary notion of a 'day' is not sensitised to the various definitions fine-tuned to specific purposes, like the Sabbath day defined as the period from one sunset to the next sunset, or the astronomer's

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[31] Wittgenstein, *PI* 217, and *RFM* V-45.

classification of four sorts of days—the decalogical day, the true solar day, the mean solar day, and the sidereal day, each geared to a specific purpose. Modern and sophisticated techniques of measurement that dissect space and time into microns and nanoseconds, respectively, have replaced the old system of feet and ounces and ordinary clocks with hour, minute and second hands. Just as the special sciences come up with sophisticated tools for displaying the internal space-structures of matter, space and time—structures obscured under the homogenised lumps of ordinary practices—similarly philosophers too should take up the task of providing new tools for revealing the true syntax of language (including ordinary language), which was obfuscated by the sheer lack of proper tools of dissection. How would Strawson reply to these objections of Russell? He could say that just as alternative systems of measurement would have different sets of referring expressions, so would the term 'day' under consideration. And within each option we would have the further choice of putting the relevant term to a referring use (i.e., pushing the context into the background) *or* a descriptive use (explicitly stating the context by incorporating it into the description).

I shall argue that for Wittgenstein, one can construct a more exciting answer. Displaying space-time in terms of microns and nanoseconds is not based upon a given space-time boundary, but breaking, bending and blending space-time in terms of the new tools of measurement. Claiming that the referring functions are actually statements of existence is not grounded upon simple logical atoms and their configurations given out there. Rather, it consists in turning one language-game into another, in the same way as the causal language-games on the interaction between concrete objects are turned into conceptual games of mathematics. Besides, the so-called precise and perspicuous definitions furnished in lieu of the vague and imprecise ones would themselves be ruptured from within—in the same way as the freshly drawn outlines on the unmarked regions themselves stand in need of interpretation of their qualitative

and quantitative identities. The question remains as to whether Strawson would accept this line of defence against Russell.

Russell comes up with a very interesting exercise of unearthing certain extra-ordinary empirical situations that lie behind our ordinary confusions about the true syntax of language. One may perhaps more readily appreciate certain psychological factors and contingencies operating in our perceptions. For instance, the way in which our sense organs and nervous systems work, we cannot register the fact that there are only disconnected bits furnished by each sense organ, and the brain dynamics actually gel together the discrete stimuli into unitary patterns. But here Russell proposes a more adventurous thought experiment. He asks us to conceive that, had our earth been like Mercury, approximating the temperature of the sun, what looks like ordinary physical objects with neat cohesive boundaries would disintegrate, thereby splitting up the apparent subject–predicate propositions into a series of atomic sentences. Now, this proposal of Russell immediately provokes us to say that our bodies along with their perceptual organs would themselves crumble under such conditions and would not be available for registering this wonderful phenomenon—a cosmological, ontological and syntactic revelation. But keeping that aside, I can, on behalf of Strawson, attempt a rejoinder with a more appropriate philosophical significance. Even if the objects of the earth disintegrated in the suggested fashion, it would present us, not with absolute simples with unique configurations, but again with fresh occasions of simple–complex interplay, where reference and descriptions would interchange their roles across different uses. It would again float up the two options of either pushing the context into the background or stating it in the shape of an attributive use.

Russell objects to Strawson's statement in section 1: 'The way in which he arrived at the analysis was clearly by asking himself what would be the circumstances in which we would say that anyone who uttered the sentence S had made a true

assertion.'[32] The upshot of Strawson's objection in this statement seems to be this: the standard necessary conditions of truth of an assertion of the form S would not enable Russell to arrive at a complete (necessary and sufficient) analysis of sentence S. It would not take care of the excesses—the context specificities as to where one is entertaining a presupposition and where one is making a statement.

Russell rejoins that he was not operating with the commonly conceived truth conditions of assertion S, as Strawson thinks him to be doing. He contrives a hypothetical situation (in which Strawson's charlady accused by him of stealing retorts: 'I ain't never done no harm to no one'). Russell argues that here Strawson himself has to go beyond the standard rules of syntax regarding negative particles and interpret the statement in such a manner that double negatives emphasise negation, and do not cancel out each other to generate the positive assertion that there was at least one moment in which the charlady was harming the entire universe. Russell would say that he (Russell) too had been adopting a non-standard mode to arrive at an accurate and full analysis of S to get at an accurate representation of the usually unclear and confused thoughts.

On behalf of Strawson, we can say that the context-specific spillovers can by no means be neglected. It is the concrete backdrop of the charlady's assertion and not a *uniform but non-standard* mode of analysis that gives the key to the correct meaning of the charlady's sentence.

Russell says that whether the meaning of 'meaning' should be in terms of binary truth-value or independent of it is a matter of mere convention. He contrives a hypothetical situation where an atheist of an imaginary community, knowing that all persons need to be confirmed believers in God in order to maintain office, apparently adopts Strawson's intuition and says: *that the Ruler of the Universe is wise—is not false*. Russell says that we would not be prone to say that this atheist, by reckoning the

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[32] Russell in 'Mr. Strawson on Referring', p. 338 quotes this statement of Strawson.

subject-expression as an empty term, spontaneously comes to see the statement as neither true nor false, and then fixes the 'not true' adjunct by another spontaneous procedure. Russell argues that we would not be inclined to say that all this is occurring in accordance with our natural acceptance of the so-called 'ordinary' usage of 'meaning' and of 'false'. Now I would like to contend that this example is not so fatal for Strawson as Russell takes it to be. I would rather say that the atheist is artificially contriving this usage in order to exonerate himself from any punishment. Russell has here deliberately forged a situation with at least three peculiar features: (*a*) whether the subject-term is empty or not is metaphysically unsettled; (*b*) commitment to this metaphysically dubious object is essential for the basic security and conditions of living; (*c*) the atheist *does* wish to escape punishment (whereas we can conceive situations where a heroic atheist would not adopt any defensive strategy to escape punishment). It seems that it is the uncommonness of the situation that gives the impression of the atheist's use being an uncommon convention. In most ordinary situations devoid of these peculiarities, we can say that a sentence can be meaningful but devoid of truth-value.

We need to ponder on the popular claim that while Russell imposes a uniform analysis on all expressions of a particular linguistic category, Strawson lays out rich details of the lived situations of actual usage. But (in the last part of his paper) Russell says that ironically it is Strawson who turns common usage into a fetish. He neglects the fact that mathematical, scientific and logical enterprises that work with precise rules and formulations are a part of human life as well, and cannot be brushed away from the field of usage. Preferring one convention to another is also a part of usage, and Strawson cannot impose a uniform interpretation (e.g., existential presupposition for all universal statements) as the only proper one. We have seen that Strawson offers a different treatment for statements on class and properties, but apart from that it is indeed surprising why he holds that except for the contexts of narrating fictions and

teaching language, the placement of the definite description in the subject-position makes the use referential. Strawson, who works with such sensitivity with regard to exploring the philosopher's attributive preoccupations with typically referring expressions (personal pronouns and indexicals and demonstratives), should be equally cognisant of such a phenomenon occurring in the ordinary spheres of common usage apart from fictional or pedagogical discourse.

In point of fact, Strawson does point out that sophisticated fictions and sophisticated romancing place the definite description in the subject-position and take up the stance of a referring use, though actually the use is attributive.[33] While he illustrates sophisticated fiction in the third endnote of the same article, he does not provide illustrations of the referential stance of definite descriptions in the context of sophisticated romancing, and this gives us the freedom to conjure examples on his behalf. We can think of a dramatic situation where a man utters the following words to a woman: 'If loving you is wrong, Oh I don't wanna be right.'[34] Further, when asked for an explanation by his fiancée (who happens to overhear this conversation), the man explains away this speech act as a quotation and not a statement. In Strawson's terminology, when the man's fiancée accuses him of making a referring use of 'I', 'you', etc., he exonerates himself by shifting to a purely attributive use of these indexicals. This imagined example brings out at least two interesting points:

(a) we do make attributive uses of definite descriptions placed in the subject-position in cases of sophisticated romancing, a very common occasion of our everyday life—a fact acknowledged and then ignored by Strawson;
(b) we oscillate between the referring and attributive uses of the same expression in the same sentence.
    Strawson's theory of reference is one where pre-linguistic

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[33] Strawson, 'On Referring', section III, p. 280.

[34] This happens to be a song sung by the group known as Carpenters.

(though scheme-relative) individuals and presuppositions (of the unique existence of individuals having a particular descriptive content) determine the rules to be applied in either of the ways (referring or descriptive). The notion of conceptual scheme may land Strawson in trouble, saddling him with an unschematised reality (which waits out there to be schematised). The rules too have an inherent descriptive content which (within the scheme) takes us to the unique reference. All these commitments are problematic and may take Strawson down a Russellian incline— the one he had been persistently trying to avoid. Perhaps Strawson, in order to turn his use theory into a thoroughgoing exercise, should have made the later Wittgensteinian move of rupturing the rules internally and blending them with reality or reference.

In his *Individuals*, Strawson weaves a more refined narrative on reference, description and presupposition—one that throws up refreshing routes of affinity and discord with Russell on the one hand and Wittgenstein on the other. The deeper sense of presupposition and identification offered there in the framework of space-time and conceptual scheme has a direct bearing on the later development of the present work, and cannot be dealt with in this first chapter. Besides, as this account demands a space of its own, where it can evolve into the required readiness for appropriate treatment, I have been obliged to place it in the Appendix to this work (see Appendix, section I).

6. Wittgenstein vis-à-vis Kripke

It should be clear by now that though Wittgenstein is often misinterpreted as a multiple-descriptivist (by Kripke, among others), he is neither a descriptivist nor a non-descriptivist. Kripke holds that for Wittgenstein, the name is actually an incomplete series of definite descriptions, none of which is necessary or sufficient for reaching out to the reference. Each may drop out or be replaced by a new definite description. Of all the definite descriptions that are associated with a name, there is no fixed

subset that achieves the reference.[35] This misinterpretation can be simply rectified by the insight that Wittgenstein has a weapon with which he can confront both the descriptivist and the non-descriptivist. He demonstrates descriptivism to be wrong, not because each definite description may fail to fit the referent, or each definite description is externally attacked by other definite descriptions, and yet reference obtains. The theory is wrong because each definite description, rather each expression of language, is *internally ruptured* and yet reference obtains. As already pointed out, the common folly shared by both these rival camps is their failure to appreciate this internal rupture of language. The non-descriptivist, in his attack on descriptivism, i.e., in claiming that a particular definite description does not match the referent, presumes the semantic transparency of both the referent and the description. For Wittgenstein, this semantic gap between description and the referent can be bridged, not by further and further ostensions and descriptions (descriptivism), nor by an external object (of whose referential identity the user may be totally ignorant) as causally determining my reference (non-descriptivism). This gap, to repeat, is bridged in uses and actions in which description and reference are blended together.

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[35] See Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, p. 31, for this enjoyable misreading of Wittgenstein.

Wittgenstein on Reference, Description and Grammar

We start with the exercise of deriving a comprehensive picture of Wittgenstein's later views of reference and description, particularly from *Zettel* (*Z*),[1] *Philosophical Investigations* (*PI*), *Philosophical Grammar* (*PG*),[2] and to some extent from *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics* (*RFM*). Like many other central issues of his later writings (family resemblance, forms of life, action, etc.), Wittgenstein does not always treat this topic as a separate theme locatable in definite stretches of his texts. His views on reference often come in sporadic comments, scattered suggestions that at times seem to be incomplete and indecisive. Still, if one delves into the combination of both the systematic and unsystematic reflections on the issue, one can see that it is as important as his notions of family resemblance, language-games, privacy, aspect-seeing and forms of life; indeed, all these notions cohere into a close-knit corpus. Besides, in the course of this exercise of grappling with his texts, one finds minute details of an overwhelming variety dispersed all over, demanding a thematic classification. Thus, given my objective of presenting a systematic and comprehensive treatment of Wittgenstein's writings on this particular issue, i.e., of reference and description, as well as the ambition to push him beyond what he explicitly committed himself to, the mode of

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[1] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, eds G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. Von Wright, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981).

[2] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Grammar*, ed. Rush Rhees, trans. Anthony Kenny (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984).

narration in this chapter is bound to be tenuous, long-drawn, at times repetitive and often primarily exegetical. However, I have sought to bring some order into the exposition by orienting his scattered comments and suggestions on reference and description towards the notion of grammar—a central notion in his later thoughts.

The chapter proceeds in three phases. The first phase opens up the basic anti-foundationalist theme of Wittgenstein's later philosophy with a detailed demonstration as to how, for him, both the descriptive and non-descriptive tools of achieving reference fail to work. While the notion of a non-conceptual reference is inherently flawed for later Wittgenstein, none of the descriptive mechanisms designed to achieve reference come up with the required self-interpretive character; they spread out instead in an interminable array of further descriptions and interpretations. Though not often housed in the specific terms of 'reference' and 'description', Wittgenstein has graphically detailed and multilayered arguments to show why both descriptivist and non-descriptivist tools fail to connect language with a supposedly extra-linguistic meaning or reality. Thus, the first phase of this chapter ramifies into a number of subplots:

(a) the failure of outer and inner ostension in achieving reference;
(b) the failure of a grammatical sortal in carving out a self-interpretive route to reference;
(c) reference and description being a grammatical contrast and not ontologically distinct;
(d) the failure of measurement as pinning down a quantitative identity as reference;
(e) the failure of physiological events as being non-conceptual foundations of grammar and reference; and several other related issues.

The overall theme of this section will be to harp on the internal and grammatical harmony between language, thought and reality.

The second phase of this chapter centres on two specific topics. The first is Wittgenstein's treatment of the notions of sense and reference with special reference to elliptical sentences. We have sought to situate this discussion against a wider background that incorporates a contrastive analysis of Frege's view as well as the Naiyāyika/Mīmāṁsaka controversy on the interpretation of elliptical sentences. The second topic is Wittgenstein's analysis of language-games with empty names, in comparison and contrast with Russell's and Strawson's treatment of the issue.

The third phase folds up this chapter with an indication of how/whether Wittgenstein's notion of the internal or intra-conceptual harmony between language and reality accommodates the demands of facts, and thereby effects a reconciliation between the autonomy and non-autonomy of grammar.

1. The Dichotomy between Descriptivism and Non-descriptivism: The Wittgensteinian Breakthrough

Starting with the important reminder that Wittgenstein endorses neither descriptivist nor non-descriptivist theories of reference, it is important to take note of the fact that he is often misinterpreted as a multiple-descriptivist. On this reading, Wittgenstein upholds a name as being an incomplete series of definite descriptions, none of which is necessary or sufficient for reaching out to the reference. Each may drop out or be replaced by a new definite description. Of all the definite descriptions that are associated with a name, there is no fixed subset that achieves the reference.[3]

The following narrative is designed to show how Wittgenstein's anti-foundationalist weapon can be deployed against both the descriptivist and non-descriptivist (*à la* conceptualist and non-conceptualist) theories of reference. Wittgenstein would say that descriptivism is wrong *not only* because each definite description may fail to fit the referent, or because each definite

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[3] For instance, Kripke, in *Naming and Necessity*, reads Wittgenstein as a multiple descriptivist; see p. 31. I have elaborated on this in the previous chapter.

description is externally attacked by other definite descriptions and yet reference is found to obtain. The theory is wrong because each definite description, rather, each expression of language, is *internally ruptured* and yet reference obtains. By the phenomenon of 'internal rupture', what we roughly mean is this: whatever devices we use to catch the referent—the verbal rule, i.e., definite description, or non-verbal ostension (physical or mental), nervous excitements, brain patterns—these do not have any self-interpretive content; and whatever interpretations we provide in terms of further explanations (verbal or non-verbal) again call for further interpretations ad infinitum. So the common folly that the non-descriptivist shares with the descriptivist is the failure to appreciate this inbuilt opacity of language and all interpretative exercise. Wittgenstein further emphasises that the non-descriptivist objection—i.e., the one against descriptivism to the effect that a particular definite description may not match the referent—itself wrongly presumes the semantic transparency of both the referent and the description. For Wittgenstein, this semantic gap between description and the referent can be bridged, not by further and further ostensions and descriptions (descriptivist theory), nor by an external object (of whose referential identity one may be totally ignorant) as causally determining her reference (non-descriptivist theory). For him, this gap is bridged in an intra-linguistic harmony between language and reality, which ultimately dissolves into uses and actions blending description and reference together in a seamless complex.

Before getting into the detailed nuances of this semantic gap and its dissolution in the forthcoming subsections, I lay out Wittgenstein's preliminary overview of the distinction between reference and distinction.

1.1 *A Preliminary Distinction between Reference and Description*

We may start by clubbing Wittgenstein's view of the distinction between reference and description with that of Strawson, in so

far as for both of them the distinction is not an ontological or psychological one, but rather functional or grammatical.[4] As we know, Strawson conceived the distinction between reference and description as answering to two different roles that language plays. The referring function answers the question: *what* are you talking about; and the descriptive function answers the question: *what are you saying* about it. Here, as we have noted, this interplay of referring and description is clearly geared to the statement-making function of language, i.e., it is inherently attached to the truth and falsity claims of the statements made or at least attempted to be made. Strawson had further clarified that reference is imbued with the presupposition of the unique existence of an individual, which, when it turns out to be false, ends up in the sentence losing its truth-value, or its statement-making status. The truth of the presupposition consists in a correct referring use of the referring expression, which comes down to satisfying the specified contextual conditions. Correct ascriptive use of the referring expressions, on the other hand, only requires that the descriptive content of the referring expressions fit the object answering to the expression, while the satisfaction of the contextual conditions is not essential.[5] Now, though Strawson does acknowledge that the difference between the referring and descriptive uses of a referring expression may

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[4] There seems to be an interesting tension between descriptivist and non-descriptivist tendencies in Strawson. He gives out non-descriptivist vibrations in so far as he says that '*the thing* should be in a certain relation to the speaker and the context of utterance.' But it is a standing and general pronouncement in his theory of reference that for all expressions, meaning is given by rules or conventions that make the referring use possible. And to give rules and conventions is to offer the descriptive bridges to reach out to the reference. See Strawson, 'On Referring', p. 285. Thus, though we have permitted ourselves to start with a note of consonance between Wittgenstein and Strawson, we must note that Wittgenstein cannot accommodate the descriptivist overtones of Strawson's theory. I shall present a brief analysis of their disagreement in section 2.2 of this chapter.

[5] Strawson, 'On Referring', p. 285.

well obtain within a fictive context, i.e., the said difference can again be nested as a subordinate level under a discourse which is principally attributive, yet he does not elaborate the details of this mechanism.[6] Further, naming and referring would not be the same for Strawson, for while you can baptise an object in an attributive context, say in the context of a fiction or hypothetical generalisation, reference for Strawson is principally defined in terms of truth-value or the statement-making uses of language.

Overall, Strawson's view of reference is more or less clear and definitive, while, as we have already noted, Wittgenstein's view is not so. Wittgenstein has very few explicit and structured entries on naming, and still fewer on reference. First, it is not quite clear whether naming and reference are the same or at least on the same footing. Second, while Wittgenstein's observations on naming suggest interesting concordances with the Strawsonian notion of reference, there is nothing in Wittgenstein's observations to restrict naming or reference to truth-value or statement-making games. However, let us start by noting the ways in which Wittgenstein illustrates naming:

  (i) A builder calls out the words 'slab', 'pillar', 'block', 'beam', and his assistant brings the relevant stone (*PI* 2).
 (ii) The teacher calls out names like 'vase', 'table', 'plate', 'sofa', and the child is taught to touch the relevant object (constructed on the model of [i]).
(iii) The teacher utters the words in the course of ostensive teaching, pointing alongside to the relevant objects (*PI* 6).
 (iv) One memorises words and their meanings (*PI* 47).
  (v) A word is uttered and the subject is asked to recall the image of the corresponding object (*PI* 6).
 (vi) Putting pieces on the board (*PI* 49).
(vii) Somebody trained to emit a particular sound at the sight of something red, another at the sight of something yellow (*PI* p. 187).

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[6] At least he does not elaborate this in 'On Referring'.

(viii) Naming is attaching labels to things. Different tools are marked with different signs, and when the hearer is shown a sign, she brings the particular tool marked with that sign (*PI* 15).

The difference between reference and description emerges as an interactive play—the referring game is a mere preparatory move, and descriptions comprise more elaborate and complex activities. 'We may say: *nothing* has so far been done, when a thing has been named. It has not even *got* a name except in the language-game' (*PI* 49). Delineating the internal details of the images, comparing two images in terms of their duration, sequence and intensity, and the actual moves of playing with the pieces—all these are easily seen to be the corresponding moves in descriptions with respect to (e) and (f). Reference roughly consists in projecting an object with a non-relational, isolated and solitary character as an indivisible unit, playing down its internal complexity and relations with other objects. The spirit of the referring or naming games is commonly seen in such uses as: 'Explain with reference to the context', 'Give all the references in your Bibliography', 'point of reference', 'frame of reference', 'reference food' (as applied to the main cereals in the diet), etc. It is thus clear that the naming or referring game can be played in non-statement-making contexts as well. In fact, (c), (d) and (e) can be taken as unproblematic examples of such cases, for one can engage in ostensive teaching and learning of the meaning of words which have no corresponding entities ('yeti', 'unicorn', etc.). The very first illustration taken from our ordinary communication is a fictional or hypothetical narrative to which the question of truth-value does not apply, and expressions like 'point of reference', 'frame of reference', need not only occur in statement-making uses. In all these cases, the typically referring expressions like proper names, definite descriptions, pronouns, indexicals and demonstratives may all be put to a referring use in so far as it is used to start up a discourse, flaunting an apparently indivisible and unanalysable

identity, to be further loosened up in its relational delineation with other objects.

Let us recall the list of language-games that Wittgenstein enlists in *PI* 23. There, the very first game, viz., giving an order and obeying it, may often be a referring game (the order to call up an image corresponding to a word, the order to match up a word with a picture—all these orders pertain to imaginary objects) which are not geared to presuppositions of the unique existence of an object and thus do not claim to make a statement with a truth-value. As for other games—constructing an object from a description (a drawing), speculating about an event, forming and testing a hypothesis, making up a story and reading it, play-acting, guessing the answers to riddles, telling a joke, translating one language to another—these are all descriptive exercises, where symbols with an indivisible appearance do come up as a limiting case for descriptional configurations to start off. As for asking, thanking, cursing, greeting, praying—whether or not they are associated with real situations or imaginary ones—they do involve an interplay of reference and description: they consist in an interaction between the what/whom that is thanked, cursed, greeted, prayed for or interrogated, and the complex content of all these activities. As for describing the appearance of an object, reporting and testing a hypothesis, presenting the results of an experiment in tables and diagrams—these are all statement-making games where reference-descriptional interplays operate with a truth-value.

Again, very interestingly, in *Z* 304 Wittgenstein talks in terms of sense and reference with respect to mathematics. He speaks of the infinitely many references of a mathematical rule, and of a particular reference that one means amongst all of them. It seems that by 'sense' Wittgenstein means the descriptive content of the rule (the rule for continuing a series), and by 'reference' he means the computable result, the value to be obtained at each step of the series. The rule or the sense is the particular mathematical function and the reference is its value. If one can play out the distinction between reference and description within

the attributive-cum-prescriptive games of mathematics, which are not descriptive statements but paradigms of making such statements, then there is no reason to hold that for Wittgenstein the reference–description interplay is relegated to statements and truth-value.

1.2 *Reference versus Description and Philosophical Grammar*

As already noted, Wittgenstein's insight into this internal rupture of descriptions is graphically detailed in its analysis, and brought out in multiple phases and directions. We can profitably structure this account in the framework of his notion of grammar, to see how grammatical sortals and rules, traditionally supposed to be the minimal essence of an object and thus the foundation of reference and description, are themselves internally fissured in Wittgenstein's anti-foundationalist philosophy.

Philosophers customarily look upon grammar as a logic of language—as the rock bottom, underlying all disciplines in all languages. As logic has to set up criteria for evaluating arguments—arguments that might be given in any discipline and in any language whatsoever—it has to abstract from all language-specific and subject-specific contents, and forge skeletal forms of valid arguments and statements. Logic has to conduct the two-way traffic of extracting matter from form and form from matter. It has to turn the specific subject-matter of arguments—i.e., the individual constants and the predicate-constants—into appropriate place markers and variables; conversely, it has to prescribe a way in which the empty array of signs chiefly composed of variables is legitimately filled out with appropriate matter. Logic ensures this by assuming every expression (general name, proper name, verbs and definite descriptions) to have an underlying category or a sortal concept that equates with the type of variable that the relevant expression can be a value for. To take simple examples: in propositional functions like 'x is coloured', or 'all x-s are coloured', we can put 'this table' and

'all tables' respectively, but not 'this act of throwing a ball', or 'all mathematical equations'. Thus, the grammars of 'table' and 'equation' are mutually discordant; the conceptual network within which they fall, or the logically permissible set of ways to operate with them, do not match. Philosophers usually think that these broad categories under which the objects fall constitute their real essences, and the grammatical sortals and rules represent these real essences. And once grammar fixes the semantic category of an expression, it also determines its syntactic character, thus determining which rules of placement are to be allocated to which types of variables, what their permissible modes of combinations are—in short, which arrangements of signs are to be called well-formed formulae and which are not. Thus, grammar may be said to constitute the broad categories of an expression which will determine the transition of its reference and meaning in all possible contexts as well the range of its syntactic recursion.

This is not the notion of grammar that Wittgenstein upholds. *For him, the grammar of an expression is a norm of representing or describing reality, and is not itself answerable to extra-linguistic reality.* Examples of these norms of description would be: 'There are four primary colours,'; '2 + 2 = 4'; 'Sensations are private,' etc. These norms are self-contained and autonomous in the sense that they do not fall back upon anything outside themselves, for whatever foundations are posed as their grounds or justifiers are sucked into grammar. Grammar does not trail behind pre-given referents, or pre-fabricated rules of semantics, or the supposedly transparent mechanisms of physical or inner ostension to referents, facts of empirical regularities, or even an extra-linguistic need or purpose of communication. Alternative grammars or norms of representation, and thus alternative modes of referring, are all admissible.

Let us try to break into this controversial claim about grammar with the illustration of the numerical paradigm mentioned above: '2 + 2 = 4' as a grammatical proposition stands apart from both analytic propositions on the one hand,

and empirical propositions on the other. The proposition in question cannot be an analytic one, because the very notion of meaning-equation (between '2 + 2' and '4' in the present case) is flawed, for semantic rules or definitions cannot foreshadow what it is to be 2 + 2 and append it with the further claim that all such cases are to be equated with cases of being 4.[7] Nor is this proposition grounded on experienced regularities of two and two objects being four. Rather, grammatical propositions with their apparent meaning-equations constitute paradigms to read experience in a particular way. They form an aspectual transition between two experiences—that of 2 + 2 and that of 4—and hold them in a physiognomic cycle, where the experience of two and two things disperses into that of four, which in its turn reverses back into the old experience of two and two. The mechanism has been compared with white light passed through two crossing prisms, where the single ray disperses into the seven colours and reverts back into its unbroken singularity (*RFM* III 42). The entire phenomenon is not seen as a causal process occurring in time, but as the same thing undergoing two different aspects, gliding into each other to forge an identity. If we experience two and two things adding up to five, we either prefer to *see* five units hidden in the appearance of two and two, or the reverse, or turn the apparently palpable and recalcitrant experiences into hallucinations.

So grammar is autonomous in the sense that it is not constrained by reality, i.e., the force of experience is not allowed to impose on grammar; rather, the very way of reading experience is constituted by grammar. If the process of adding

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[7] For Wittgenstein, verbal rules cannot forge the required connection between language and reality for the simple reason that rules for using words have to be phrased in terms of further words, which again invite further rules for their application ad infinitum. Whatever rules we may specify, however we might detail the features of similarity, words will lead to words and to further words. This fundamental opacity of words accrues to mathematical terms and thus to mathematical rules as well, as explained in the previous chapter.

things regularly fused them at their edges, we might be prone to choosing 2 + 2 = 3 as our arithmetical paradigm, i.e., to read experience under this new grammar. But the moot point is that there is nothing like an imposing representation or an irreversible experience that is prior to grammar. Experience is already invested with the autonomy of grammar; we never confront raw unconceptualised experience at first, and then decide which grammar to apply. ('*Essence* is expressed by grammar' [*PI* 371]. 'Grammar tells what kind of object anything is' [*PI* 373].) We at the very outset exercise options between alternative grammars, not between the raw influx of sensory stimulations on the one hand, and subsequent grammatical schemes floating up to let us decide which scheme will be suitable to taking in the influx. The talk of this influx or the given data of experience is to be seen as situated on a second level as a contrast between the *talk* of autonomy and non-autonomy. Whether Wittgenstein's philosophy allows an extra-linguistic reality *causing* experience and grammar in a pre-semantic way is something we shall explore more elaborately later in this book.

It is very important to set apart Wittgenstein from Kant on the one hand and Quine on the other. It is not only the obvious difference that Kant maintained a uniform and unique scheme—space and time as a priori forms of intuition, a fixed set of a priori concepts (categories) and principles of schematism—across all humanity,[8] while Wittgenstein admits a multiplicity of different grammars. One can even try to flatten out the scheme–content dichotomy in Kant, by insisting that the talk of uninterpreted content as opposed to the scheme is just a linguistic necessity, very much in the same fashion as Wittgenstein. Even if we let this pass, what remains as the crucial difference between these two philosophers is that while for Kant the a priori forms of mind constitute a describable domain of reality (i.e., the domain of mind), Wittgenstein does not accord such a status to his

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[8] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Marcus Weigelt (London: Penguin, 2007).

grammatical propositions. In other words, his grammar cannot be said to trail behind an extra-linguistic mental reality, in lieu of an external or physical one.

As for Wittgenstein's tension with Quine, this requires a more incisive analysis. Quine argued that whatever meaning we can extract from the given sensory stimulations is already embedded in a conceptual scheme. Quine's illustrations—graphically detailed, genuinely fresh and unworn, richly imaginative—effectively destabilise the professed givenness of the given, floating up the multiple routes of interpretation.[9] But at the same time, his theory was geared to an unrelativised core that lent itself to different relativisors pertaining to different conceptual schemes. Thus, Quine's theory was not sensitive to the fact that whatever scheme of relativisation one may draw up, however one may attempt to chart out the relativisor and the unrelativised, attempting to extract the immaculate core before being subjected to the process of relativisation—such a project itself becomes vulnerable to further relativisations. In other words, to make his schemes work, Quine willy-nilly had to commit himself to a semantically transparent entity, starting from which he could track down the different networks it could enter into. Unless one admits this *given* as wearing its meaning on its sleeve, one cannot lay down how cognitive mechanisms, the structure of the sense organs, peculiarities of the intervening atmosphere, light waves and air particles are distorting the *given* into alternative characters. For Wittgenstein on the other hand, working out different conceptual schemes would invoke an already interpreted content. The oscillation between different grammars or norms of representation is a tension *within* the sphere of representation or interpretation, not between an uninterpreted content and various routes of interpretation.

What I have been trying to underline is a difference between the notions of semantic opacity and epistemological relativism,

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[9] W. V. O. Quine, *Word and Object* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1979), chapter 2.

and this point can be made in a slightly different way. The difference between these two notions can be rephrased in terms of a difference between the two modes in which one may launch an attack on the theory of verificationism. To launch a full-fledged attack against the piecemeal equation of the meaning of each sentence with a unique array of sensory stimulations (as endorsed by verificationism), it is not sufficient to activate a holistic scheme of beliefs, as Quine did, against this atomistic approach. For Wittgenstein, it is crucially important to destabilise the content of experience itself, its qualitative identity as well as its quantitative closure.

With this prelude, I now go on to track the further nuances of Wittgenstein's anti-foundationalist tools and how they move in myriad directions.

1.3 *Ostended Referent as a Part of Grammar*

When we seek to point to the object with a name without the grammatical sortal, thinking that the ostended object is there as a given entity ready to be picked out as an instance under a unique grammar, the ostended object reflects back various grammatical fulgurations, it erupts in various grammatical expressions. Pointing to a pencil, I may say 'This is tove'[10] (Wittgenstein deliberately chooses a fictitious word which does not have a lexical meaning). This ostensive definition can be variously interpreted, and the ostended object can project various grammatical identities like:

> This is pencil
> This is round
> This is wood
> This is one
> This is hard
> This is shiny

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[10] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958), p. 2 (henceforth *BB*).

This is thin
This is upright position
This is lateral direction
This is the angle of light, etc.

(Incidentally, one can find similar examples in *PG* p. 60).

Let us play up the significance of these examples by contriving more adventurous ones. Suppose there are several Dalmatians sitting in front, how can their common coat, apart from the individual spot patterns, be projected as the unique object of my ostension? How can I point to the common texture of their hair apart from the varying degrees of softness or roughness? Suppose there are two or more Dalmatians sitting in a sunroom, in different positions and postures, the sun falling at different angles and making a different filigree of light and shade on the body of each. How will an ostensive procedure be able to cut out their common Dalmatian coat in exclusion from all multiple eruptions? This shows that the ostended object is part of the grammar, it is already absorbed into a sortal category. 'The interpretation of spoken and written signs by ostensive definition is not an application in language, but part of the grammar' (*PG* 45 p. 88).

On the other hand, when one strives to ostend to a unique grammar with the help of a special sortal expression, the latter erupts into various options. Wittgenstein indeed says that grammatical sortals like 'colour', length', 'number', 'position', 'direction', etc., show the post at which the word is stationed (*PI* 29), and this observation at first blush *does* suggest them (i.e., the sortal expressions) as having a disambiguating efficacy in the ostensive procedure. But he immediately goes on to qualify that there is no unique way of taking the words 'colour', 'length' (to which we can indeed add other varieties like 'number', 'texture', 'black and white spots', 'coat' or 'hair') (*PI* 29).

To take 'colour' for instance, ostending to an object and saying 'This colour is yellow' would require further grammatical clarifications as to whether it is the body or the surface or the

light and shade effect that is yellow (*PG*, para 27 p. 63). To
take further examples: I point to a transparent green glass on
the table, and then to the same glass painted in a picture on
the wall, and say 'This colour is green.' What do I mean by
'colour' in this case? Do I mean the colour in the transparency,
or the opaque green as painted on a wooden door or as a
pigment on the palette? In the first alternative, the colour of
the green glass and that of the painted glass will not be the
same, for it is the complex of colour patches that depicts the
glass in the picture that is its colour. The second alternative
too has no greater prospect of presenting a pure opaque green
colour as a single object of ostension.[11] Colour takes different
dimensions, depths and hues depending on the thing that has
the colour and depending on its environment; one cannot find
a self-identical saturated sample of green or white that can be
captured by ostension. As Wittgenstein observes in *ROC* I 61,
'We are inclined to believe the analysis of our colour concepts
would lead ultimately to the *colours of places* in our visual field,
which are independent of any spatial or physical interpretation;
for here there is neither light nor shadow, nor highlight, etc....'
Of the two Dalmatians, I may see one as being white with black
spots, and the other black with white spots, putting black and
white alternatively in the background and foreground. Light
falling on their body at different angles and different intensities
will produce tonal variations of white and grey on the different
parts of the body. There would be intractable variations if the
light happened to filter through curtains of different colours.
Differences in the sitting postures and the movement of muscles
too cause subtle redistribution of shades. A painter who depicts
each of these dogs in its characteristic posture and position with
the individual light and shade pattern of its body, has to use a
different combination of colours on her palette for each of them.
The ostensive definition, along with the explanatory phrase

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[11] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on Colour*, ed. G. E. M. Anscombe,
trans. Linda. L. McAlister and Margaret Schattle (Oxford: Basil
Blackwell, 1950) (henceforth *ROC*), I 18.

'Look at the common white and black coat,' would be of little help to her. All this shows that the broad grammatical category (of 'colour' in the present instance), supposed to show the post at which it is stationed, bursts forth from its ceremonially stationary character and disperses in different directions.

Similar phenomena would recur with 'number' as the proposed sortal concept. What happens when we point at a supposedly unitary object or to a collection and say, 'This number is one,' or 'This number is five'? Is it the substance that is said to be one, or the colour or shape that it has? And why cannot the ostended object itself be taken to be many—as the several rays of light? Is it the number of individual animals that is called five, or the number of their classes or zoological categories, or that of their limbs, or their acts of standing, sitting, etc.? The numeral itself cannot pick out the supposedly objective cardinality out there without putting that cardinality under a concept, under a further grammatical identification. (Wittgenstein's observations in *PG* II, section 21, can be relevantly referred to in this context.) And even if the sortal expression 'number' is equipped with the relevant conceptual specification, such expressions would again spread out into further indeterminacies. The grammatical expressions, however finely tuned they may be, will not cut out an extra-linguistic meaning; they themselves rupture into several grammars, meanings or routes of interpretation. In fine, the relation between the word and the object, the sign and the signed, the verbal grammar and the non-verbal essence is mutually penetrative—it is not like a vehicle carrying you to your destination. The object erupts into various verbal grammars, while the verbal grammar erupts into non-verbal identities.

Pointing to an object and uttering a name would not pick out an extra-linguistic object for the simple reason that names themselves are thickly layered with grammar and conceptual richness, which cannot be taught by naming. Can you point to a name to cut out its nominality, or its alternative dimensions of being a proper name or a common name, its being embedded in its orthogonal character or otherwise? As Wittgenstein clarifies,

one may point to a group of two nuts and say 'two', where the intended reference is to the general and second-level concept of two, or to the group of nuts as an instance of the concept. However, this ostensive definition may be misinterpreted as the *proper* name of *this* group of nuts. This duality between proper names and common names would recur with respect to all alternative readings as regards the colour, position, direction, etc. There is no reason to suppose that only individual solid substances can be ascribed proper names, while qualities are worthy only of common names. (In this connexion we can legitimately borrow the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika notion of trope—the quality that is as much individual as the object itself to which it belongs, and thus standing in need of a proper name.) Interestingly, grammatical sortals like 'this individual group of nuts', as opposed to 'the number of this group', or 'this individual colour' as opposed to 'the common shareable colour', would fall back on further clarificatory sortals regarding the status of an individual versus general first-level or second level concept (*PI* 28). Further, naming cannot incorporate subtle points about the material identity of a name, what should be considered as a change of spelling and what not, where one should draw the line regarding the change of a phonetic element, or relation between sound and letter. Often, insensitivity to the orthogonal character of a name stands on the same footing as meaning blindness (Z 184).[12] Such internal dimensions in the grammar of 'name' cannot be brought out by naming.

1.4 *Acts of Physical Ostension as Embedded in Grammar*

The myth of bare particulars or of self-identical detachable features out there in reality, waiting to be captured by proper names, needed another myth of there being uniform acts of putting labels on each of these entities. On this view, each of

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[12] Also see G. P. Baker and P. M. S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Understanding and Meaning* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), vol. 1, pp. 406–23.

the acts—identifying colour as opposed to shape, or shape as opposed to number or the angle of light—exhibits a characteristic essence. It just needs a little introspection to expose the absurdity of such suppositions. We sometimes attend to colour by putting our hand up to keep the outline from view, or by not looking at the outline of the thing; sometimes by staring at the object and trying to remember where we saw the colour before. We identify the shape sometimes by screwing up our eyes so as not to see the colour clearly, and in many other ways. And even if there were a characteristic process of attending to the shape—say, following the outline with one's finger or eyes, this by itself would not constitute what we call identifying the shape in contrast to its colour (*PI* 33). It is weirder to talk of a single act of identifying the common black-and-white coat of a Dalmatian—an act which brushes away the variant effects of light and shade, variant sizes and shapes and configurations of their spots. Is it possible that screwing up our eyes to have a blurred image of black and white will, so to speak, allow us to abstract from individual variations in colour and spot patterns? Such a blurred image, which has rather a strong potential to throw out similarity relations in numerous directions, has still less chance of catching a single detachable correlate.

Wittgenstein had further argued in *PI* 85:

> Does the sign-post leave no doubt open about the way I have to go? Does it shew which direction I am to take when I have passed it; whether along the road or the footpath or cross-country? But where is it said which way I am to follow it; whether in the direction of its finger or (e.g.) in the opposite one?—And if there were not a single sign-post, but a chain of adjacent ones or of chalk-marks on the ground—is there only *one* way of interpreting them?

There is not a single way of interpreting a single act of pointing with the finger. I can not only read in the direction of

the wrist to the finger, or from the finger to the wrist, but also in the direction in which the knuckles move (i.e., upwards)—the direction in which a sliver of sunlight falls on the palms, or even the direction in which the hair stands on the arms. And whatever corrective techniques the one pointing may adopt—rubbing his knuckles, flattening out the bristles of his hair, patting my back every time I do it in the 'right' way, putting a cross against the 'wrong' direction—all these pictures are again available to innumerable ways of reading.

All ostensive procedures of identification are pictures that are ruptured from within: they disseminate into an unending flow of more and more words, and more and more pictures, until we realise that they do not have a separate boundary that can link up to the meaning, but themselves becomes a part of the meaning. In this regard, Wittgenstein has a more penetrating analysis to offer in *Z* 222–24. Here he observes that while human eyes always give things out, our ears or nose do not; though a dog's ears give out, and in this respect they cannot only be pointers to meaning, but are a part of meaning. Similarly, our eyes are not only the perceiving mechanism, but are part of the seen as well. The eye casts glances, it flashes, radiates, gleams, terrifies, etc. It is interesting to note that with this rich fusion between acts of ostension and the ostended, Wittgenstein swerves from both the behaviourist and the dualist perspectives. If the dualists accuse Wittgenstein of equating meaning with behaviour, Wittgenstein just needs to qualify that it is not one-dimensional behaviour but the interactional, dynamic and dialectic play of sense organs and the limbs (*Z* 224). Here we can well foresee the direction in which Wittgenstein's thoughts are plying. He turns behaviours into a richly exhaustive corpus of meaning, thereby denying them the inbuilt privacy, insularity and transparency that are traditionally foisted on them. Thus displaying the mental as invaded by signs—i.e., by both verbal and non-verbal behaviour—Wittgenstein paves his way towards the grammatical harmony between language and reality.

1.5 *Grammar is not Answerable to Inner Ostension*

Let us pick up the trail from the end of the previous section. For the Augustinians, the fact that verbal language and gesture language fail to capture a unique meaning only shows that we need something stronger, something 'deeper' or 'inner', to effect the correlation between the word and its self-identical meaning. They find it in the mental imageries and internal acts of 'meaning' or 'understanding'. It is these acts of inner ostension that make referents indestructible. One is always able to bring *red* before the mind's eye even when there is nothing red any more. Besides, while physical icons or acts of ostension may miss their target, a mental ostension gets unfailingly hooked on its unique meaning. Wittgenstein points out that there is not always a mental image corresponding to a name, hovering in our mind (*PI* 51). And the claim of the referent (say red) as being readily available to our memory even when the colour is destroyed, has no more philosophical worth than the claim of there always being a chemical formula to produce a red flame. It may well happen that we can no more remember which colour it is a name for, in which case the name can no longer play the role of the paradigm that it had previously played in our language-game (*PI* 57). Besides, even when the relevant memory-image (of the red colour sample) is available, it is not always that we judge the physical sample in the light of our memory-image. We do not always judge that the sample is darker than it was before, but we may also rectify our memory-image in the light of the physical sample, conceding that our memory-image itself has darkened. 'This shews that we do not always resort to what memory tells us as the verdict of the highest court of appeal' (*PI* 56).

But the strongest insight in Wittgenstein's attack lies in exposing how the Augustinians get saddled with a mental picture as a 'super-likeness' or a super-picture which makes it an image of *this* and of nothing else (*PI* 389). For Wittgenstein, the Augustinians need to appreciate the fact that like the physical picture, a mental picture too, say of a white dog skin with black

spots, can be read in many different ways. It cannot by itself get hooked on to its unique meaning-entity, the unique Dalmatian coat, so to speak. Nor is there a mental act of meaning or intending as a conscious process running concurrently with the physical process of speaking. It may at best reduce to an array of unspoken words, mouthed silently, which plainly cannot have any magical ability to perform a feat that a physically uttered sentence cannot. We cannot hold up a single act or occurrence, whether mental or physical, a characteristic 'feeling' of meaning, a sincere tone of voice, or an earnest facial expression, as a plausible agent to do the trick.

1.6 *Grammar of 'Understanding' and 'Meaning'*

This ongoing narrative on the grammars of different expressions being not routed to but blending with meaning, leads us on to another mode of analysis—the analysis of the grammars of the terms 'understanding' and 'meaning'. One has to distinguish between the surface grammar and the depth grammar in the first place. Surface grammar is schoolbook grammar that teaches the parts of speech, their modes of placement, inflexions, etc. But while surface grammar puts all expressions with superficial resemblances, like 'sleeping', 'eating', 'walking', 'meaning', 'understanding', etc., under the same part of speech, viz., that of a verb, or a state with a definite duration, philosophical grammar takes note of the varied expanse of uses of these expressions and accordingly places meaning and understanding in a separate grammatical category of a non-episodic concept having no definite origin or duration.

Philosophical grammar is not grounded on the real or static essence of objects; it is fleshed out through an expansive survey of all the uses in varied contexts. For Wittgenstein, it is not 'depth' grammar in the sense that it goes beyond the surface of ordinary uses down to the ideal level where the supposed one–one correspondence with the logical atoms of reality are brought out. Rather, depth grammar consists in the more varied

survey of the surface uses—of the various combinations that the verbs 'understand' or 'mean' enter into, but other verbs like 'eat', 'say', etc., do not.

We can orient Wittgenstein's account of the grammar of 'understanding' and 'meaning' around the following points:

(a) A survey of the grammar of the word 'understanding' shows that the understanding of a sentence does not take us from a set of signs to facts.
(b) It does not take us from a set of signs to the (Fregean) sense.
(c) That is, neither the proposition nor the reality pre-exists understanding.
(d) Rather, a survey of its uses in varied contexts shows that it takes us from a set of signs to a more easily surveyable symbolism.
(e) Understanding is not a spiritual phenomenon that acts as a foundation of external physical actions. Rather, the understanding of a set of signs takes us from one mode of behaviour to another.
(f) As already mentioned, understanding is not on the same grammatical plane with other acts having a definite origin and duration. It is an ability that is cashed out through a motley of uses.

Understanding is not apprehending the supposed correspondence between a proposition and an extra-linguistic reality. Nor does the proposition pre-exist *its* understanding. Had understanding been the apprehension of a correspondence (spatial coincidence) between two separate chunks of reality, then one could have meaningfully spoken of 'understanding half a proposition', just as one speaks of 'eating half a loaf'. (One also cannot meaningfully speak of half a knight's move.) So neither the proposition nor the reality pre-exists understanding in the manner of two spatial chunks pre-existing their spatial coincidence. When one speaks of understanding a non-propositional chunk of reality in an apparently meaningful

way, say 'understanding a clump of tree', we actually invoke the understanding of the person who planted them and the possibility of decoding what that person understood (*PG* I p. 39).

Though it was Frege who first appreciated that truth is not correspondence, and understanding a proposition is not understanding this putative correspondence, he ended up saying that we apprehend propositions or thoughts, which are entities in the third realm; and thoughts which were supposed to bridge the word with the referred object were turned into a referrable reality in the indirect contexts.[13]

When understanding is conceived as reaching out from language to something behind it, it feeds on the assumption that language is an inessential garb or label to be attached to a reality waiting out there. For Wittgenstein, understanding is not going from signs to extra-linguistic reality (Russell),[14] nor from signs to transparent sign-independent thoughts in the third realm (Frege). Understanding, rather, is moving from a relatively strange set of signs to an easily surveyable symbolism (*PG*, p. 40). Thus, the grammar of 'understanding' as used in varied contexts shows that it is not going from inessential signs to essential and unique reality. 'Language must speak for itself' (ibid.); one cannot explain what is meant by a proposition by bringing in something other than language. This is quite apparent in uses like 'I mean what I mean by the sentence "You must leave"' (ibid.). To consider some other uses, e.g., 'What did you mean by these words "You must leave"?', this question is to be answered by another proposition, not by presenting an extra-linguistic fact. As for the other uses—'What did you mean by those words?', or 'Did you mean those words?'—these uses also do not indicate a passage beyond words but a question as

[13] Gottlob Frege, 'The Thought: A Logical Inquiry', trans. Anthony Quinton, in P. F. Strawson (ed.), *Philosophical Logic* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

[14] Russell, *Philosophy of Logical Atomism*.

to whether the spoken sentence is to be understood as a serious indicative statement or command or a joke (*PG* p. 41).

Further, our uses show that in understanding a musical piece, we are never expected to learn or to be able to say what it is all about, but rather to understand why these bars should be played in this way, why the pattern of variation of loudness should be just like this. Understanding music is translating a musical picture to a picture in another medium. Similar remarks apply to understanding a proposition, which is virtually understanding a picture (*PG*, p. 42). The difference between understanding a picture and not understanding it is internal to the picture. To survey these two cases of 'not understanding a picture':

(a) 'I do not understand the picture.' I say this when I am not able to envisage the flat colours as going out of themselves to represent anything.

(b) 'I do not understand the picture.' I say this when, though I am able to see the picture in its representational aspect, I am not able to identify the spatial representations as familiar things, like books, bottles, etc. (*PG*, p. 42).

Thus, in neither case is the failure to understand the picture a failure to go beyond the picture to an external reality. So correspondingly, success in understanding the picture stated in the affirmative form is also internal to the picture. Similarly, failure or success in understanding a proposition is internal to the sign-system that constitutes the proposition.

What gives credence to the notion of interpretation as a self-interpretive bridge (whether it is, in the Fregean sense, the sign-system of an ideal language, physical and inner ostension, verbal rules, or physiological links) laid beside reality? Wittgenstein supplies pertinent answers, many times in many ways. This notion of interpretation consists in placing that bridge alternately as external and internal to the notion of destination-reference, in dispersing the white light into seven colours and reverting back into the single beam through crossing prisms. In *Z* 233, Wittgenstein gives a more picturesque example. When we are

sitting in a darkened hall and watching a film, we have put the
projective mechanism into the represented cinematic content; the
former is seen alternately as external and internal to the latter.
Absorbing the projective mechanism into the cinematic content
consists in seeing the former as *leading* to and yet as identical
with the latter. On the other hand, if we delink ourselves from
this cyclic transition, we would virtually be confining ourselves
to the flat patches and movements of light on the screen (*Z* 233).
To say that a symbol cannot be further interpreted is simply
to say that I feel at home with the present picture, not that I
bump my head into a pre-interpretive content. Rather, when I
interpret, I step from one level of *thought* (and not from given
data) to another (*Z* 234). What we take to be the terminus of
explanation or interpretation is already interpreted; we have the
autonomy of interpreting that intended picture, i.e., the already
interpreted picture, not the autonomy of interpreting what is the
uninterpreted cause of interpretation. When something is seen
as interpretable, it is seen from outside, and when it is seen as
uninterpretable it is seen from inside. But to see it as interpretable
or uninterpretable is a move *within* interpretation. We do not
see something from the outside as a primordial 'it' giving itself
to alternative interpretations (*Z* 235). Our interpretation cannot
touch the uninterpreted; whatever it interprets is already sucked
into the interpretative network. So reference cannot be at the
pre-interpretive level as Russell and Kripke had held.

In *Z* 334–37, Wittgenstein adopts some ingenious examples
to demonstrate that signs do not jump out of themselves to their
respective referents through a one–one correlation. (In what
follows the readers should kindly imagine the grey colours of
the figures as red.) He asks us to compare three different kinds
of language-games: (a) I am expecting a red circle; (b) I am
expecting a Ⓡ (that is, 'I put a coloured picture of a red circle in
place of the last few words'); and (c) I am expecting a ▨ ○ (here,
'red circle' is expressed by the juxtaposition of a circle and a
red patch). Wittgenstein points out that none of these language-
games can be deduced from the other. To deduce (b) from (a),

one has to show that the words 'red' and 'circle' refer separately to two immaculate entities—pure colour and pure shape—and then forge the required cohesion in a single red circle, i.e., Ⓡ. A colour is always shaped and a shape is always coloured, and these two words 'red' and 'coloured' do not carry any information as to how these two objects—one red and the other circular—shed their respective contingencies (the first object discarding its shape, texture and material content, and the second magically ejecting everything other than its pure circularity), and thereby conjure up the required meaning.

Wittgenstein also points out that the proposed theory of the sign and the signified as being mutually external and yet getting into an isomorphic correlation is not only flawed in detail, but also in principle. The problems of this theory do not pertain to specific gaps in the proposed connection between language and reality, but to the very notional possibility of such a correlation. 'The important question here is never: how does he know what to abstract from? But: how is this possible at all? or: what does it mean?' (*Z* 336). Wittgenstein comes up with two more language-games—in one the phrase 'red circle' is replaced by a red slip of paper and a slip with a circle on it; and in the other, a red circle. The way of translating the first language is to take the first slip as referring to a red pencil, and the second slip as determining what one should draw with it. Thus, the two slips belong to different parts of speech—the first to nouns, and the second to activity-words. Wittgenstein draws our attention to the fact that the second language-game works in a different mode—there are not two different words, but the apparent duality works towards a single meaning (*Z* 337). The upshot of all these illustrations should be sufficiently clear: the sign and the signified are not mutually external, where the former spurts forth the latter magically, across a void in between; rather, the purported passage to the signified is already embedded in the sign.

Had signs been an inessential garb of reality, and understanding been a passage from the former to the latter, then one could easily have replaced any word in a sentence by

any other. Suppose we venture to replace the sentence 'I see a black patch there' by 'a b c d e f', each word by an alphabet in the precise order (*PG*, p. 44). The fact that we cannot make this substitution shows that the meaning of 'I', for instance, is not something that spatially coincides with the isolated phonetic content of 'I'; on the contrary, it is absorbed into 'I' along with other words in other contexts in a holistic expanse. As the replacement of 'I' by 'a' cannot replace these rich layers of association, 'I cannot think the sense of the above sentence straightaway in the new expression' (ibid.).[15]

For Wittgenstein, understanding is not an external foundation of, but unfolds in and through, uses and activities. But doesn't this use—'I must understand this order in order to act on it'—show something contrary to what Wittgenstein is trying to achieve? Doesn't it show understanding as over and above the ability to act? 'And the above sentence makes good sense!' (*PG*, pp. 45–46, para 8). Wittgenstein explains: '[It] makes good sense: but not a metalogical sense.' While consistency, completeness, validity and entailment, being applicable to logical systems, arguments and statements, are metalogical concepts, meaning and understanding on the contrary are not metalogical concepts. While 'entails' in the sentence 'p entails q' traces a logical connection between the two statements, the word

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[15] It seems that Wittgenstein's view would be fundamentally opposed to the Chomskyan hypothesis that there are two separate systems—one the sound-system, and the other the CI (Conceptual Intentional) system, which get connected in humans through the process of evolution. It is not the case that some animals have sound-systems, such as birds, and on the other hand there are chimpanzees who have the CI system in place but not the sound-system. Indeed, the sound-system is not the sound-system unless it is holistically invested with meaning—they are not two separate systems waiting for evolution to join them up. We may venture to suggest that the theory of evolution itself is a language-game, where used signs like 'sound-system', 'CI system', 'evolution' and 'joining them up', etc., do not capture facts, nor do they capture sense. Rather, the talk of their describing and capturing sense gets significance within the scientific language-game of explanation.

'understanding' in the above sentence does not trace a logical connection between order and the action. Uses with expressions like 'order' and 'act' along with 'understanding' do not forge a network with other expressions that are characteristic of a logical system, viz., 'propositions', 'premises', 'conclusion', 'argument', 'valid' 'invalid', 'deduction' etc. Our uses do not shape up a pattern where the 'order' gets a sense of logical priority of being separable from and entailing the executable action.

A survey of uses (*PG*, p. 48) shows that understanding does not belong to the same grammatical plane as other states, like toothache. Understanding or meaning are abilities which cannot be condensed in a state with a definite origin and duration—they cannot be considered as actual reservoirs containing all uses, but at most as a hypothetical reservoir or an ability. Understanding or meaning a word is not an instantaneous grasp of its grammar. The Augustinian model feeds on this misconception of understanding—as an instantaneous grasp of the meaning of each word as encapsulating all its combinatorial possibilities. On this supposition, rules for grammar governing 'not' for instance, would describe a supposed reality lying behind 'not' such that when another 'not' is applied to it, these two negations yield an affirmation in the same way carbon and oxygen yield carbon dioxide. Again, with the two uses of 'is'—(*a*) '2 and 2 *is* 4', and (*b*) the rose *is* red—the Augustinians would insist that there are real essences of identity and predication behind the two kinds of 'is' respectively, and from each respective essence the specific rule follows. Wittgenstein counters this by pointing out that it is the two rules of application that constitute the two kinds of 'is'. The Augustinians think that two 'is'-es have a common meaning body, just as the pyramid and the prism have a square surface in common, while Wittgenstein would hold that this game of abstraction can only be played by making signs move in a dynamic process. The so-called common form is not a static, rarefied essence lying passively. If I were asked what I mean by 'and' in the sentence 'Pass me the bread and butter,' it is my answering with the dynamic gesture of gathering the

two things together that would illustrate what I mean. A sign is made into the sign of negation by the way it works. 'What I want to say is that to be a sign, a thing must be dynamic, not static' (*PG* p. 55, para 17). Signs do not refer to static grammar; reference is achieved by mobilising the sign, by turning it into a paradigm of description through a dynamic process (ibid., para 18). Similarly, there is nothing in the objects and nothing in the pattern of our mental makeup that underlies the formation of mathematical paradigms like 2 + 2 = 4. Instead, such formations consist in mobilising our experiences of two and two on the one hand, and that of four on the other, into a flat physiognomic cycle, which is virtually an exercise of turning our experience into cinematographic pictures (*RFM* I 28, 36, II 22).

1.7 *The Grammar of 'Referring': Grammar is not Founded on Reference*

The fact that the German word for 'meaning' is derived from the German word for 'pointing' might delude one into believing that referring or pointing is the primordial connection of ourselves with reality—and is thus the foundation of grammar and subsequent descriptions. 'Naming here appears as the foundation—the all in all of language' (*PG,* p. 55, para 19). Just as in recounting the uses of 'meaning' and 'understanding' we explore their intra-linguistic status, we should adopt the same mode of analysis with 'naming' and 'referring'. In the opening pages of this chapter, we noted some ordinary uses of 'naming' and 'referring' along with some of Wittgenstein's own examples, enumerated under the points (i) to (vi). One can easily appreciate that the basic character of naming or referring consists in posing an object as an indivisible and non-relational identity as the starting point, keeping temporarily out of focus its structural complexity and relations with its surrounding environment. Contrary to the claims of the Augustinian model, reference does not consist in a primordial, pre-conceptual acquaintance with a naked and bare individual, to be followed up by the subsequent delineation of its properties and relations and other structural

complexities. The difference between reference and description consists in an interactive play, where the referring game is the mere preparatory move (like putting pieces on the board), and descriptions comprise more elaborate and complex activities. This simple or elementary character of the referring game is *relative*—relative to that particular simple/complex interplay in which it is embodied. The elementary move of referring in one game can figure as quite a sophisticated and complex move of description in another game. In other words, simplicity and complexity are not absolute in Wittgenstein's philosophy. The constant metamorphosis of simple into complex and vice versa also breaks through the claims of unique analysis and ultimate terminus of analysis popularised in logical atomism. Thus, reference is constructed in and through use; the referred object does not pre-exist as a given chunk to make the referring use possible. We shall try to argue that even within each of these naming–describing interplays, the reference never pre-exists but is fleshed out in and through each description.

Wittgenstein points out that the Augustinian model of reference and description stands on a par with taking each letter of a script to stand for a particular sound, or as signs of emphasis or marks of punctuation. On this conception, the particular language or script turns out to be merely a description of sound-patterns along with their various modes of intonation and punctuation. Or to take another example: a person completely innocent of the intricate mechanism of a locomotive will equate all the levers—the switch, crank, brake, pump—with their external projections jutting out from various parts of the cabin and all looking alike (*PG* 20, also *PI* 4 and 12). So far as the builder's assistant simply fetches specific building materials, viz., slab, blocks, etc., at the call of the builder (*PI* 2), so far as he does not know how to operate with the inner structure or composition of each of the building stones, or to integrate them into a continuous structure, he has only the rudiments of the entire process of building. The operations of all these persons will not go beyond passive assortments of the parts (of language, machine or the building).

The point of all the examples of referring games cited in section 1.1 is to harp on the preparatory or rudimentary character of reference vis-à-vis the complex activity of description, with the all-important reminder that they are not preparations for a passive combination into descriptions. Thus, the flaw in the Augustinian model of language is exposed as being on the same footing as such theories that envisage language speaking or other activities as comprising two primary functions—first, the elementary move of gathering materials, and second, the act of passively assorting these inert chunks. It is strange why Wittgenstein seems to be quite content with characterising the Augustinian model of language as merely an error of omission. 'Augustine, we may say, does describe a system of communication; only not everything that we call this language is this system … it is appropriate, but only for this narrowly circumscribed region.' It is like defining 'game' as consisting in moving objects about on a surface according to certain rules, thus restricting oneself only to board games, leaving out the others (*PI* 3, also see *PI* 2, 4). In *PG* 19 (p. 57), Wittgenstein qualifies the simplicistic nature of Augustinian model: 'So it could be said that Augustine represents the matter too simply; but also that he represents something simpler.' The first move would be like restricting oneself only to, say, board games; the second move would be like stopping short at putting pieces on the board.

The confusing picture that emerges may be somewhat cleared up in the following manner. There is perhaps a disanalogy between the game of making alphabets stand for sounds and the distribution of sounds on the one hand, and the assistant's response to the builder's call, the naïve equation of machines with their external projections, or touching objects corresponding to names on the other. The examples in the second set can be said to be referring games in relation to some descriptive operations of a less demanding nature than the standard ones, the latter being the activity of masonry, combining objects to create something, or driving the locomotive respectively. That is to say, the builder's assistant, the learner of word-meanings, and the naïve spectator

of a locomotive would be able to spread out the respective orders in a descriptional configuration—like the arrangement of the building materials with the limbs of his body, wrenching out the handles and placing them side by side. Their referring activities do not stop short at bumping their heads against impenetrable chunks, refusing to break forth in any mode of spatial distribution. Indeed, Wittgenstein says that naming by itself says nothing, as merely putting pieces on a board without a potential release into playing moves cannot properly be said even to be 'putting pieces on a board' (*PI* 49). And in so far as the mere emitting of different sounds corresponding to different colours does not break forth in a distribution in space and time, it is not a referring game, it is not an exercise in language.

Now the question that arises is whether Wittgenstein would consider the operations with alphabets as standing merely for sounds and their distribution as a preliminary language; and if so, whether he would allow the so-called standard operations of signs (as signs going out of sounds to stand for something else) as an extension of the former. (The contrast between these two languages is not that the former has merely syntax and no semantics, while the latter attains their standard combination. The former too is a language with a different kind of syntax–semantics interface than the latter, perhaps more akin to the structure of musical language.) Whether or not Wittgenstein would concede this or not, it seems that the Augustinian model of language does not even come up to this so-called simple language of script–sound correlation model. For in so far as in the Augustinian model, each sign stands for an isolated object, it gets crammed into separate inert chunks, from which no amount of further supplementation by a fresh stock of names can enable it to break forth into a distribution, even of a syntactic or phonetic character. To take the builder's game in *PI* 2, one can introduce further referring exercises, add a series of alphabets to be used as numerals, and the two words, 'this' and 'there', to be used along with pointing gestures, and finally some colour samples. A gives the order 'd slab there', and simultaneously he shows a colour

sample and points to a place. The assistant plays out this order by his referring game—by matching slab with colour sample, counting each slab for an alphabet in the serial order, and then placing the appropriate number of slabs with the relevant colour in the place pointed to as 'there' (*PI* 8, 9, 10). What is crucially important to note in this connexion is that unless the rudimentary games of 'slab, block, pillar, beam' were already ensconced in a network of distribution (whether it is the passive assortment model or an actively informed and specialised operation), no amount of addition of further names would have achieved the descriptional expansion of the Augustinian model of reference, viz., the model of passive signification of insular objects (substance, attribute, actions, and even *unrelated* relations). The notable point in Wittgenstein's strategy of gradual expansion of a simple language-game to progressively complex ones is not the addition of further names, but the addition of those names as animated into further activities. In fine, the Augustinian model of reference and description is fundamentally flawed, not only in details but in principle, not only as an error of omission but as an error of commission. Any reading of later Wittgenstein that underplays this flaw in the model would not be a good direction for appreciating his anti-foundationalist insights to the fullest extent.

To repeat, the simplicity of the so-called simple moves of referring can only be appreciated in so far as they do not remain as truncated fragments, but are seen as incorporated into the full-fledged games. And the way the simple is incorporated into the complex, or reference is incorporated into description, is obviously not through a passive assortment independent of any use, but in a dynamic interplay of varying levels of complexity.

1.8 *Against Pre-conceptual Status of Indexicals and Demonstratives*

Let us look at Wittgenstein's take on the role of indexicals and demonstratives, usually taken to be ideal referrers, picking

out their unique referents non-descriptionally, independent of any conceptual exercise. 'Here', 'there', 'that', 'this', 'now' are customarily claimed as wheels that smoothly take us to our destination, without having any conceptual or interpretational load themselves. But Wittgenstein points out that children have to learn the meanings of these expressions themselves—and these meanings are learnt by pointing to a place. So pointing occurs not as a self-interpretive bridge that takes you to the referent, but occurs *in* the use of words, where the meaning of 'pointing', or the concepts of pointing and direct non-conceptual demonstration themselves need to be learnt *conceptually* (*PI* 9). The sentence 'This word signifies *this*,' does not take us outside language to an external referent, but signifies the various uses in which it poses such a referent. That the demonstratives or characteristically referring expressions take us outside language is itself given in description, and to give the sense of its referring we have to give a detailed description of its uses, some of which we have recounted in our enumerations (i–vii). At *PI* p. 175, Wittgenstein narrates that by 'reference' we often mean the privileged position of an utterance or a statement at a particular time, or in a spatial background. He cites examples such as, 'when I heard the word…', 'I was then going to say…', where the words 'when' and 'then' take on this crucial task of reference. A statement may have many peculiarities, all of which may compete to be the privileged frame of reference, but the essential reference or the essential points of departure will be those that we would find in common with an alien form of expression; and that would be the focal point of orientation giving us a smooth entry into translation. At *PI* pp. 187–88, Wittgenstein further illustrates how the seemingly pointed reference to a single entity actually gets diffused through a detailed survey of uses. What do I really refer to when I say: 'I am afraid'? When an interrogator presents the speaker with options like a cry of fear, wanting to tell how he feels, or reflections on the present state, the speaker is apt to deny all these and come forth with the following descriptions:

'No, No! I am afraid.'

'I am afraid. I am sorry to have to confess it.'

'I am still a bit afraid, but no longer as much as before.'

'At bottom I am still afraid, though I won't confess it to myself.'

'I torment myself with all sorts of fears.'

'Now when I should be fearless, I am afraid.'

To insist that there is an identical referent, viz., fear, under all these would be an Augustinian hangover, an illusion that easily dissipates in cashing out each of these reports in terms of different expressions sharing nothing in common, not even the word 'fear'. If we doggedly attempt to retain the putatively common essence of fear as the identically shared referent, we shall do so only at the cost of presenting fragmented and truncated accounts. 'I can find no answer if I try to settle the question "What am I referring to?"' (*PI* p. 188). In fact, instead of asking the question 'What does "I am really frightened" really mean, what am I referring to when I say it?', one should rather ask: 'In what sort of context does it occur?'[16]

However, Wittgenstein points out that often the presentation of a single and succinct claim of reference—say 'The word "slab" refers to this object'—instead of the sprawling array of uses in various contexts does serve a purpose; but that purpose is simply to remove the mistaken idea that the word 'slab' refers to a building stone that we in fact call a 'block'. Similarly, to say that the signs 'a', 'b', 'c' signify numbers is only to remove the mistaken idea that 'a', 'b', 'c' play the part in language that is actually played by 'block', 'slab', 'pillar'. One can also say that

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[16] Here, Wittgenstein's explicit rejection of there being a self-identical referent of 'fear' stands on the same footing with his treatment of 'pain', though it is the latter expression that preoccupied him through the entire course of his analysis of private language and the private game of referring. And his treatment also stands in stark opposition to the theories of Kripke and Putnam, for whom 'pain' *and* 'fear' as well are indexicals or 'rigid designators' having an identical transworld referent.

'c' refers to this number and not that just in order to highlight that the letters of the alphabet are to be used in the standard order as a b c d and not in any other order (*PI* 10). Or to take an extreme case of such a claim to reference, the claim is meant to distinguish the referring expression from meaningless ones, such as occur in Lewis Carroll's poems, or from words like 'Lilliburlero' in songs (*PI* 13). And obviously such marks of contrast themselves presuppose the motley of uses in which the contrast case is situated (*PI* 10).

1.9 *Reference and Description: A Grammatical Interplay*

To grow out of the passive assortment or linear combination model of the Augustinians is to grow out of the absolute distinction of the simple and the complex and purportedly unique modes of analysis popularised by logical atomism (*PI* 46–49). A chair can be seen as made of bits of wood, or of atoms and molecules, or (normally) as composed of a backrest and seat propped up on four legs, or as a unitary design resisting any analysis (*PI* 47). The visual image of this tree can be looked upon as a complex of colour patches, or as a broken outline composed of straight bits. A curved line can be said to be composed of an ascending segment and a descending segment. A chessboard is normally seen as a unique composition made out of thirty-two white and thirty-two black squares. But we can also see it as the colours black and white and a schema of squares. There is no inherent simplicity in the respective elements of each mode of complexity, say, of the chessboard.

> Is the colour of a square on a chessboard simple, or does it consist of pure white and pure yellow? And is white simple, or does it consist of the colours of the rainbow?— Is this length of 2 cm. simple, or does it consist of … one bit 3 cm. long, and one bit 1 cm. long measured in the opposite direction? (*PI* 47)

'Is it unimaginable for someone to see the group | | | | | (e.g.) as the group | | || | | with the two middle strokes fused, and

should accordingly count the middle stroke twice? (True, it is not the usual case)' (*RFM* I 168). 'The question "Is what you see composite?" makes good sense if it is already established what kind of complexity—that is, which particular use of the word—is in question.' Asking 'Is the object composite?' *outside* a particular language-game is like asking whether the verb 'to sleep' meant something active or passive (*PI* 47). The phenomenon of seeing a tree, for example, in different ways can be accounted for in two ways: either we are baptising the entire tree, say by the proper name 'Terry', in which case 'Terry' can internalise its reference in so many different ways (two of which we have already cited). On the other hand, we can also say that we are not baptising the tree, but baptising each of its so-called elements.

To take another example: suppose there are some squares of different colours like red, green, white and black arranged like a chessboard. We can have the words, R, G, W, B corresponding to these squares and a sentence, say 'RRBGGGRWW', describing an arrangement of this sort (*PI* 48). (The readers are asked to see the dark and light shades of grey as red and green respectively.)

The sentence above is a complex of names and thus a description of the configuration of the squares. But none of the squares which figure as names in this usage is inherently simple; in other language-games, each of them can be said to be a composite, consisting perhaps of two rectangles, colours and shapes. Thus, what is a name 'R' in this context may well be a description or a sentence describing the configurations of two rectangles in another context. To say that we cannot define or

describe certain elements but simply name them will only mean a limiting case where a complex consists of one square. Here its description seems to give the illusion of being the *name* of the coloured square. Similarly, the above expression RRBGGGRWW can embody a preparatory referring move in a game where the entire figure taken as a single unit enters into certain relations or interactions with other similar figures.

Adopting this argumentative track, it would be easy to appreciate that the block, pillars, slabs, etc., can be looked upon as a complex of colour patches (where the subatomic cohesion into a hard, impenetrable chunk is kept out of the purview), or as pattern of light and shade, and so on. So the builder's assistant in playing out the referring game of fetching the building blocks in the customary fashion is only exercising a simplicity that is relative in at least two senses. First, playing this referring game the assistant is already embedded (though in an imperfect and incomplete fashion) in the activity of building, which opts out of the other two kinds of games just mentioned. Playing the referring games in the other two modes, for instance, would have incurred different modes of activity—scraping it into layers of different chromes and lumping them together in a single compact pile, and placing each block in the same relative position with the sun and the shadow. (These referring games would throw up the more complex games of descriptions—say of comparing two stones in terms of the variety of shades that each comprises, or uniting one light-and-shade pattern with another.) On similar lines, the customary referring game of the builder's assistant can be recast into an appreciably complex, sophisticated and elaborate game of description—the assistant taking note of how each utterance of the builder hits on his ears, tracing the movement of his limbs in lifting the slab, the configuration of his arms and the building materials, pattern of muscular tension in carrying the materials. But in the referring game that the assistant is playing (in *PI* 2 and 7, 8, 9), such activities form the *assumed backdrop* and not the substantial content of the referring game. As Strawson pointed out, *stating* that one is making a referring use, or *stating*

the conditions under which one is making it, forms no part of the significance of referring games.[17] However, when the simple game of the assistant is recast in a complex game of *describing* (in the manner indicated), some suitably simple move of referring (i.e., referring to one's limbs, muscles, etc.) crops up to even the balance. The relation between reference and description is a pattern of contrastive interplay where, though there is constant switching between roles, it perhaps never permits a disturbance in the basic requirement of a dual tension. One can undertake similar exercises of transforming the other games of referring narrated in (i) to (viii) into descriptions (see section 1.1), and thus recasting the pattern of each simple–complex interplay.

1.10 *Existence and Non-existence of Referents: Naming as a Means of Representation*

In the light of our previous discussion, we can appreciate Wittgenstein's rejoinder to some specific details within Russell's theory of names, viz., his demand that names do not refer to objects to which neither being nor non-being can be ascribed. Russell's arguments in favour of this status of referents is well known: As generation and destruction are actually the association and dissociation of elements, it makes no sense speaking of generation and destruction of the elements themselves. As the attribute of non-being cannot be ascribed to referents (or 'particulars'), one cannot also apply the term 'being' to them as a significant point of contrast. Now Wittgenstein discovers an interesting way of withdrawing either of these dual ascriptions of 'being' and 'non-being' to referents (as Russell prefers), *without* committing himself to the strange ontology of them being 'bare particulars'. He seeks to work out an interesting line of comparison between names and standards of measurement, drawing attention to the mechanism by which the standard metre stick in Paris, hermetically sealed from any undesirable influences of pressure, temperature and measuring operations,

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[17] Strawson, 'On Referring'.

and projected as the paradigm of measurement, can thereby opt out of any ascription of length. In this sense it can be said to be neither one metre long nor not one metre long. Similar remarks would apply to the standard colour sample of sepia: it can claim to be above the positive and negative ascriptions of colour-attribute (both generic and specific). Names too, in the same fashion, attain the status of *means* of representation; they become the paradigms in our language-game—something with which comparison is to be made, or something that starts off a discourse. If the pieces of the game did not exist, they would not be pieces of a game, and this does not confer an ontological speciality to the game pieces. The special privileged character of names and their referents does not go beyond their method of representation in language-games (*PI* 50, and also 51–57).

In this connection, we should take note of the fact that both the external ruptures as well as the internal opacities *within* each mode of referring or each paradigm of representation are clearly suggested by Wittgenstein (*PI* 60–64). Let A be a set of statements, orders and requests about a broom, and let B comprise apparently the same set of uses with the difference that the uses in set B are phrased in an *analysed* format in terms of the broomstick and the brush joined in a particular manner. Now, is there a sense, Wittgenstein asks, in which B can be said to be the meaning of A, and B can be said to be the *analysed* format of A? Both these questions can be answered in the affirmative in so far as one appreciates that B does not lie concealed in A, waiting to be revealed by analysis. B can be said to be the meaning of A in two ways: first, in the sense of their achieving the *same* purpose; and second and more importantly, by way of certain internal contrasts between what the meaning of A is and what it is not. That is, one can juxtapose certain statements, orders, requests with broom, table, chair, etc. (in the so-called *unanalysed* format)—all classed under set A—with a corresponding set B comprising statements, orders, requests phrased in terms of the components of the relevant objects, i.e., broom, table, chair, etc. Now in so far as we can

perform exercises like correlating sentences in set A with the appropriate formats in set B, or identifying those sentences in B which contradict sentences in A, the unanalysed format can be said to have the same meaning as the analysed format of B. But Wittgenstein immediately qualifies this with certain important disclaimers. First, the point of cashing out synonymy between A and B in terms of such internal contrast between A and B is precisely to displace the suggestion of any real essence commonly represented by A and B. Second, the precise way to cash out the meaning of 'meaning' or synonymy in terms of internal contrasts is not what we stipulate in terms of conventions (*PI* 61). Most significantly, each mode of referring or each paradigm of representation merely sets a formal or architectonic stance of activating certain descriptions, in the manner of setting out a handrail, whereby we can go up to a certain point. But just as the handrail does not contain the entire pathway, the name also does not contain all possible modes of description; and in this sense, there *is* nothing there and there *isn't* nothing there, beyond the handrail and beyond the referrer (*PI* 217, 218, *RFM* V 45).[18] Rules and paradigms of representation do not contain their meaning in their inner capsules, so to speak, but are fleshed out bit by bit through applications and descriptions. Similarly, the point of an order in the analysed form is not contained in the unanalysed one—for 'it is not everywhere clear what should be called the "point" of an order.... [T]here is not always a sharp distinction between essential and inessential' (*PI* 62).

1.11 *Reference as 'Shown' in Multiple Fashions*

Reference turns out not to be a singular pre-semantic encounter with a simple object lying out there, nor is meaning or understanding achieved by a compact set of statements drawing from the supposed transparency of verbal rules and definite

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[18] These relevant remarks of Wittgenstein are presented in the context of a discussion about rules. Still, given the descriptional nature of names, they can be applied to the manner in which they (i.e., names) operate.

descriptions. Both these phenomena spread out in a plethora of linguistic and non-linguistic activities, spilling over the present to 'a variety of actions and experiences of different kinds before and after' (*BB* p. 145, and also *PI* 35). We have seen that while with reference these activities recede to the background, meaning spreads out in explicit statements and explanations.

Wittgenstein says that the referring game of ostension cannot take off unless the 'overall role of the word in language is clear' (*PI* 30). One cannot offer or respond to an ostensive definition, say of a chess piece, unless one is already initiated into games, the specific variety of board games, the conventions of moving the pieces around the board. We have seen that the sortals that often come to accompany ostensive definitions, like 'colour', 'shape', 'length', indeed show the 'grammar', the 'post at which we station the word' (*PI* 29). But this does not imply that grammar is uniquely 'shown' as the reference presupposed by all actual and possible descriptions, in the manner that the unique and ultimate logical form of all language was claimed to be 'shown' in the *Tractatus* (4.121, 4.1212).[19] The later Wittgenstein's leanings towards multiple ways of shownness surface in such statements as there is no '*one* way of taking the word "colour" or "length"', and any attempt to disambiguate them through definitions would go on ad infinitum (*PI* 29). Similarly, there is no *one* way in which the alternative grammars of a chessboard or a tree is to be taken. Alternative or deviant grammars do not entail but are themselves fleshed out bit by bit through deviant descriptions, just as in the case of the normal grammars.

Equipped with these fresh insights, we can now venture a more imaginative treatment of *PI* 66. The examples of 'games' and 'family' were strategically deployed to show how the phenomenon of external ruptures gives way to internal ruptures. Let us recall the statement: 'Look at the parts played by skill

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[19] See also Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Notebooks 1914–1916*, eds G. H. Von Wright and G. E. M. Anscombe, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1961), p. 107.

and luck; and at the difference between skill in chess and skill in tennis.' It does not merely show how a property, viz., skill, gets replaced by the property of luck, or how the property of 'skill in chess' drops out to make way for 'skill in tennis', but how the property of skill itself breaks open to dissolve the very dichotomy between a property and a particular, i.e., between description and reference. This is another way to see similarity or resemblance in a new light—not as grounded upon non-relational 'respects' or features or identities that foreshadow different routes of similarity relations. To learn the reference or meaning of a particular word, through ostension or definition, one has already gone through a vast, complicated and indefinite network of relations—similarity relations without a non-relational *respect*. Shorn of these '*respects*', i.e., ostensible common features, and also of unique and unfailing acts of ostension, the concepts used *in* our language, as well as the concept of language *itself*, turn out to be a motley of language-games, behaviours and practices, without any common structure or content. 'Instead of producing something common to all that we call language, I am saying … that they are *related* to one another in many different ways. It is because of this relationship, or these relationships, that we call them all "language"' (*PI* 65). The emphasis on 'related' is indeed designed to wean us away from the non-relational identity, the foundational core of relations.

1.12 *Failure of Measurement in Pinning Down the Quantitative Identity*

Do all these reference/description patterns rest on a uniform quantitative boundary? Is there a single chunk of an object on which we play out all these modes of simple–complex interactions? Wittgenstein's examples on various modes of simplicity (and the further contrivances we have attempted along those lines) seek to swerve from such constraints. Yet some of Wittgenstein's statements in connection with the teaching of words like 'slab' are a bit problematic: 'This ostensive teaching

of words can be said to establish an association between the word and the *thing.…* [I]t can mean various things; but one very likely thinks first of all that a picture of the *object* comes before the child's mind when he hears the word' (*PI* 6, italics mine). Also, in the course of dissipating any putative essence shared by the acts of ostension, Wittgenstein says: 'Only think how differently we *learn* the use of the words "to point to this thing", "to point to that thing", and on the other hand "to point to the colour, not the shape", "to mean the colour" and so on' (*PI* 35). Is Wittgenstein dismissing a global essence supposedly shared by all acts of ostension (pointing to things, colour, shape, etc.) at the cost of admitting a local essence shared by all acts of pointing to a *thing*? Does this mean that pointing to one thing as distinct from others harks back to a readily available quantitative chunk of an object which is absent in pointing to colours or shapes?

Now we may argue that instead of suggesting a quantitative identity easily available for reference, Wittgenstein is suggesting that the numerical identification of things is not simply given, but a game we have to learn through an elaborate ostensive programming. One cannot point to a piece in a game *as* a piece in a game; similarly, one cannot point to a thing as a countable object numerically distinct from another through a single and transparent act of ostension. Nor can reference be determined through measurement. A little reflection will show that a measuring scale fares no better than physical or inner ostension. Any attempt to pin down a fixed originary moment of complete identification—be it with ostension, or rational intuition, or measurement—will produce an endless regress of origins. In the first place let us recall that to identify an object, say as 'blue', through ostension, we must already have identified it as having some feature—coloured, shaped, hard, etc. Similarly, to put the measuring scale against the object, one needs to identify the two points within which the object lies, i.e., to have already determined its quantity. Secondly, we also need to identify the beginning and endpoint of the measuring scale, which cannot be further decided by another scale without repeating the problem.

Similarly we also need to conceptualise the ostensive procedure itself—as an act of pointing with the finger, or a movement of the eyeball, or a mental image. Thirdly, the comparison between the measuring device and the measured object can no more be decided by measurement, than the comparison between the ostender and the ostended can be decided by ostension. Whether the act of pointing is matched up with the table lying in the direction of the finger, or with the bed lying in the direction of the wrist, or whether the mental image of the ashtray is matched up with the purple *colour* of the actual ashtray lying in front, or with its oval *shape*, cannot be passed over to further ostensions. Measurement too would involve at least two more identifications: (*a*) coinciding the left end of the object with that point of the scale from which the markers begin; and (*b*) determining the two marks of the scale between which the right end of the object lies.[20] Thus, the limits of an object, the coincidence of points, their relative position—in short reference—is presupposed and not decided by measurement (*PI* 430).

It seems that Wittgenstein does not want to retain the quantitative identity of the thing on which the different games are built, or on which the different modes of understanding are effected. Rather, it may reasonably be held that his view of the dialectic interplay between the simple and complex also breaks through the absolute distinction between the small and the large—of determinate quantitative boundaries where the large is supposed to be built out of the small static units through a process of linear addition. Wittgenstein points out that expressions like 'division of a line by a point outside it' and 'composition of forces' clearly show that sometimes we tend to look upon a greater area as composed by a division of the smaller and a smaller area as composed of a greater area (*PI* 48). The second example brings an interesting analogy between matter and meaning into play. Neither matter nor meaning should be

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[20] This analysis of measurement is derived largely from R. S. Jones, *Physics as Metaphor* (London: Wildwood House, 1982), pp. 18–30.

looked upon as a composite, tightly packed up with hard little balls or absolute, simple elements. Matter is to be conceived as a swarm of electrical particles, widely separated from each other and rushing about at great speed—thus creating a network or field of forces. The particles are not inert little balls, resting smugly in an equally inert, external and empty space. They are forces which can be said to occupy space only by buffeting away anything that tries to enter. Thus they are not *in* space, they *create* space, they *are* space. And in this sense they create a 'composition of forces', where the smaller area can be said to be composed out of greater areas. One cannot look upon matter or meaning as assorted out of smaller elements inertly adding up to progressively larger ones, for the smaller can only be understood as exploding into or creating bigger space. Reference does not hark back to an inert, simple quantitative identity underlying all modes of descriptions; but the way in which that putative identity is invaded by its *other*—the space of description.[21]

1.13 *Against Physiological Foundations of Pre-conceptual Reference*

Sometimes it is suggested that there is a specific psychological or physiological foundation behind a specific grammar or norm of representation or a mode of aspect-seeing. The Gestalt theorists often claim that there are characteristic brain patterns behind each norm of representation or each aspectual representation. The Gestalt psychologists[22] revolutionised the 'brick-and-mortar' perception of the empiricists, only to reinstate a new

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[21] Parts of subsections 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.7, 1.9, 1.11 and 1.12 have figured in Enakshi Mitra, 'Wittgenstein on the Foundations of Language: A Non-foundational Narration', *Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences: Journal of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study*, 2009.

[22] The following account of Gestalt theory is derived largely from Robert S. Woodworth, *Contemporary Schools of Psychology* (London: Methuen, 1965), pp. 215–27, and also from W. H. Stromberg, 'Wittgenstein and the Nativism-Empiricism Controversy', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 41, nos 1–2 (1980).

kind of foundation, a unique brain pattern underlying every perception, whether aspectual or non-aspectual. All discrete stimuli, the moment they enter the brain (which on the Gestalt theory is virtually a dynamic electric field), interact and fall into a pattern.[23] All brain patterns or 'organisations' have a universal character; they shape up certain stimuli into a three-dimensional figure, protruding from the rest, while the rest of the stimuli form a flat, loose and receding background. While our perception of 'this chair' or 'this table' are 'stable' organisations, aspect changes are founded on 'unstable' organisations, where the distribution of 'figure' and 'ground' alternate. The Gestalt theorists speak of various factors and forces of such organisations, of which we can mention a few: (*a*) proximity, similarity, etc., supposed to be present in the stimuli; (*b*) familiarity and attitude present in the perceiving organism; and (*c*) pregnance, good figure, which are the reinforcing factors. For W. Köhler and K. Koffka, every perception is founded on a unique brain pattern, and a new reorganisation of 'figure' and 'ground' underlies each representation of a new aspect. There is a one-to-one mapping between each perceived pattern and the corresponding organisation in the cerebral cortex.[24]

Now, there are serious problems in admitting characteristic brain patterns underlying different grammars. First of all, seeing an aspect, or operating a particular norm of representation, consists in varied kinds of activity; they do not share a universal feature of figure–ground reorganisation. Hence, the further

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[23] For the Gestalt theorists, all perceptions, be they of object, colour, shape, line, tone or tune, are responses to the entire pattern in the brain, and thus, contrary to the empiricist assumption, are physiologically on the same footing. They are all physiologically *real*, we *see* objects, aspects, as much as we see colour, we *hear* tunes, as much as we hear tones. The organisation is a sensory quality, a given sensory fact in the brain and not (as the empiricists claimed) superimposed on the stimuli by a higher act of interpretation or inference. See Woodworth, *Contemporary Schools of Psychology*.

[24] See Woodworth, *Contemporary Schools of Psychology*.

demand that there occurs a unique three-dimensional reshuffle in the brain, corresponding to the mode of grammar, does not stand. Second, if there is a characteristic figure–ground organisation matching each aspect or grammar, then each such organisation necessarily invites the possibility of an alternative organisation being available to the subject, otherwise the talk of organisation or reshuffling does not make sense. In other words, to claim that the discrete stimuli fall under a familiarity Gestalt is also to admit the possibility of alternative Gestalts—i.e., the possibility of dissembling those bits and pieces, figure receding to the ground and vice versa, defamiliarising the familiarity. But Wittgenstein points out that this option is not available to us—familiarity cannot be delinked from the face that I see (*Z* 195–98).

To enter into more fundamental objections against Gestalt theories: while constantly drawing upon brain dynamics, brain pattern and features of the stimuli, they never address the question as to how the nature of the cerebral cortex itself is to be perceived, how brain patterns themselves are represented, how the 'primitive' features of the stimuli are known. To explain them by prior Gestalt is only to push the problem one step backward. If perception of motion itself is caused by an actual motion in the brain, how can one perceive the latter, as well as the common motion of the stimuli, without a prior Gestalt? Since the notion of similarity always involves similarity in *perceived* qualities like shape and colour, how do the Gestalt theorists talk of similarity among certain stimuli, since stimuli are claimed to be conceptually independent of perception? Whatever be the nature of the stimuli, they themselves cannot perceive the proximity, continuity and (particularly) the similarity amongst themselves to readily fall into the desired whole.

All this shows that the physiological foundation of reference (proposed in the Gestalt model) will have to be pushed to a *second-level* talk about the stimuli, their relations of similarity and familiarity of a particular congregation. The different Gestalts of similarity, familiarity, do not take us from signs to extra-

linguistic realities; similarity and dissimilarity, familiarisation and defamiliarisation are all *within* symbols, *within* language-games (*Z* 198). Wittgenstein clearly suggests that the difference between *seeing* and *seeing as*, usually conceived to be a difference between a passive state and an active procedure, is actually a grammatical distinction. He points out that when we carry out instructions to *see* something *as* something else, we do not react to a pre-given thing that was the *object* of seeing, but 'we react with these words in particular situations.' When an instruction is given: 'Hear ___ as ___', or 'See ___ as ___', the words in the first blank do not refer to a pre-aspectual content. Rather, 'we react *to* these words in turn by particular actions' (*Z* 208). Wittgenstein further considers some examples that may be said to be on a higher interpretational level. When we are asked to see the picture of a chair as being of the size of a building, or our movement in contrast with the stationary sun, that difference of size or movement of the earth is not a felt content, but the application of the word—it is virtually the contrast between two different applications of 'movement'. There are not two impressions with neatly bounded content corresponding to two uses of the word 'movement' (*Z* 214–15). 'We see, not change of aspect, but change of interpretation', change of procedures (*Z* 216).

At *PI* p. 212, Wittgenstein himself proposes physiological explanation of a particular experience to expose its absurdity.

> When we look at the figure, our eyes scan it repeatedly, always following a particular path. The path corresponds to a particular pattern of oscillation of the eyeballs in the act of looking. It is possible to jump from one such pattern to another and for the two to alternate.

Wittgenstein cites the instance of the alternating aspects of the double cross (*PI* p. 207), to which we may add the convex-concave (*PI* p. 203), the duck-rabbit, the apex-base of a triangle, 2 + 2 = 4. But he reminds us that we should be aware that our description of the physiology is itself a kind of seeing, 'which can

screen the old problem from view, but not solve it'. Whenever a physiological explanation is offered, '[t]he psychological concept hangs out of reach of this explanation' (*PI* p. 212).[25]

2. Sense and Reference with Respect to Some Special Language-Games

As pointed out earlier, this section will focus on two specific questions. The first question relates to how Wittgenstein proposes to operate the distinction between sense and reference in the special contexts of elliptical sentences, and second, how he chooses to treat certain language-games with empty names. To highlight the Wittgensteinian speciality of treatment, we place his analysis against the backdrop of certain other versions which are significantly opposed to his anti-foundationalist approach, in either an undisguised or a disguised manner.

2.1 *Sense and Reference in Connection with Elliptical Sentences*

The Fregean model of a sign taking us to specific referents through the mediation of determinate senses faces serious predicaments, betraying 'sense and reference' to be 'vague concepts' (*Z* 154). This can be demonstrated in the case of so-called elliptical sentences (*PI* 19–21, also 2, 8–10; and *Z* 154). We can deal with three kinds of cases: (i) Frege's examples of incomplete sentences with ambiguous verb to-be, indexicals and demonstratives;[26] (ii) Wittgenstein's own examples of single-worded sentences like 'Slab' without any articulated structure, customarily considered as elliptically containing the other

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[25] Wittgenstein's resistance against physiological or psychological foundations of reference forms a substantial part of the next chapter. There I present a contemporary psychological-cum-neurological account of non-conceptual reference, which I shall use as a provocative backdrop to heighten Wittgenstein's critique against non-conceptual reference to the optimum limit.

[26] Frege, 'The Thought: A Logical Inquiry'.

words 'Bring me the', or 'Break the', 'Take away the', as the case may be; (iii) elliptical sentences cited by Naiyāyikas and the Mīmāṃsaka with respect to the controversy regarding the precise technique of supplementation (*adhyāhāra*) to complete the sense of the typically incomplete sentences.

The question is, how do we understand the meanings of elliptical sentences? According to Frege, to understand a full sentence is to understand the complete sense or thought expressed by it, and this requires that we understand the determinate senses of each sub-sentential expression and how these component senses contribute to the complete sense expressed by the full sentence. Now the question arises: without the required word in the elliptical sentences, how can we apprehend its sense in order to navigate to the reference? Sense or thought for Frege is a non-sensible, non-spatial and non-temporal entity in the third realm, and it can be apprehended only in a sensible medium, viz., a sentence, a picture, a gesture, etc. Now in the case of incomplete sentences with ambiguous words or token reflexives (e.g., 'Ram *is* studying', '2 + 2 *is* 4'; 'Ram came *here yesterday*', 'Ram put the pen *here*'), as the material medium is truncated or fragmented, it cannot carry the complete sense or thought, and hence stands in need of the other fragment to make the medium complete. Frege suggests that the time of utterance, the place, the surroundings, the ostensive gestures (pointing of fingers, glances, hand movements) are the missing fragments that are supplemented with the incomplete sentence by the hearer to make the material medium complete. Now the inevitable question comes up: do these missing fragments combine with the incomplete sense expressed by the incomplete sentence to make the complete thought? This is not possible, because in the Fregean scheme, the gestures, events, place and time of occurrence, etc., belong to the external world of sense-perception relegated to the first realm, which cannot join up with the non-sensible third realm—the realm of sense. Alternatively, do these separate fragments of the material medium express separate component senses which are to be combined to form the complete sense or thought? The

suggestion is not a convincing one, for without being already situated in a complete sense or thought, the discrete pieces of the medium cannot express discrete senses in a way that their combination will shape up the required completion. We can speak *not* of joining up component senses into a complete thought in the spatial model, but rather of *deriving* a thought from other *thoughts*—all of which have to be complete. So Frege has to chart out this phenomenon of understanding such elliptical sentences in terms of various stages, all of which are apprehensions of complete thoughts, from which again the ultimate thought—the required sense—is derived as a conclusion.

The process can be fleshed out as follows: Suppose on the date 13 September 2013, Mr X, standing with P, Q, R, S in front of Regal Cinema in New Delhi, points to R and says: 'He came here yesterday.' This sentence, which is an incomplete material medium, is laid out in the form of a thought: (a) 'The array of words "he"—"came"—"here"—"yesterday" expresses the thought that a person in the speaker's vicinity came to the place pointed to by the speaker on the day before the date of utterance of these signs.' Let us remind ourselves that for Frege, we do not apprehend a complex and structured fact given as an object of perception in the first realm, and *then* take it as expressing a sense or thought. Rather, to apprehend a configuration in the first realm is already to have laid it out in the form of a thought.[27] In the context of our present illustration, this would mean that (a) is followed by the subsequent thoughts: (b) 'There are P, Q, R, S in the vicinity of the speaker. (Let us note again that for Frege, one perceives different people and separate locations in the first realm, but one does not perceive the spatial arrangement of all the people along with the speaker situated in a larger space-time coordinate as a given object in the first realm.[28]) Apprehension of the next thought (c) comes up: 'The speaker pointed to R

[27] Ibid., pp. 24–26.

[28] Frege says that we perceive the sun and the quality of its warmth by our senses, but not *that* the sun is shining. Ibid., p. 20.

when he spoke.' (d) By the word 'he', the speaker intends to represent R. (e) The word 'yesterday' is supposed to point to the day 12 September 2013, etc. In this way, with other necessary supplementations of thoughts, the final thought is derived in the form: 'R came to Regal Cinema in New Delhi on 12 September 2013.'

But what about the one-worded sentences like 'Slab' in the context of the building activity illustrated by Wittgenstein? (*PI* 2, 8–10) One has to appreciate that these sentences are different from the type we have been considering so far—the type of sentences containing ambiguous words like 'is', 'bank' or *saindhava* (meaning either salt or horse), or containing indexicals or demonstratives. Even within the building activity, 'Slab' may mean 'Bring me a slab,' 'Put the slab on top,' 'Break the slab into pieces,' 'Remove the slab,' 'A slab is falling from the top in your direction, so be careful.' Without the appropriate words, the hearer cannot envisage 'Slab' as intending to represent several sentence-questions: 'Does the sign "slab" represent that the speaker intends me to bring a slab?' 'Does the sign "slab" represent that the speaker intends me to cut the slab?' etc. Without the appropriate words, just the knowledge of the non-verbal context (consisting of fragmentary and ambiguous gestures) cannot assume the role of a non-verbal medium to supplement the truncated verbal medium. We have already seen that one cannot meaningfully speak of two half-thoughts represented in two separate and fragmentary sensual media— one being the word 'slab' and the other being events and gestures going on in the first realm—and then join them up in a complete sensual medium representing the complete thought. However, the fact remains that the hearer does understand the one-worded sentence 'Slab.' Wittgenstein has given other examples of one-worded sentences, like 'Fire,' 'Water,' 'Away' (*PI* 27). In the Fregean model, the speaker in order to understand such sentences has to complete the missing components of the material medium. But ironically, to supplement the missing components the hearer already needs to have understood the complete thought.

I have deliberately tried to present the problematic in the framework of the well-known tussle between the Naiyāyikas and the Mīmāṁsakas, centring on this issue of understanding the meaning of the elliptical sentence. Thus, I seek to open up a space of comparison between the Indian and Western versions of foundationalism (with the final intention being, of course, to show how Wittgenstein carves out a path away from all these versions). But let us first have a brief look at the crux of the contention between the Naiyāyikas and the Mīmāṁsakas on this issue. The Naiyāyikas would argue that on hearing the word 'Slab', the hearer, on the basis of his knowledge of the context, figures out the missing words, like 'Bring me a', 'Cut out the', etc., as the case may be. He then supplements them with the incomplete sentence and then apprehends the full sense. Now let us note that both the Naiyāyika and also perhaps the Fregean model would imply that the hearer apprehends several thoughts in the form: '"Slab" does not express a complete thought,' 'So it has to be supplemented,' 'The speaker is speaking in a context having xy features, so by making such and such gestures he means that such and such is the case,' and so on. In this way, the hearer deduces that the words 'Bring me a' will have to be supplemented with 'Slab', and only then does he finally understand that 'Slab' means 'Bring me a slab.'

Now the Mīmāṁsakas put forth an objection to the above Naiyāyika narrative. Without understanding the *meanings* of the supplemented words, the hearer could not have supplemented the words themselves, and if he already understands the meanings of the words, supplementing the words would be a fruitless exercise. He can straightaway supplement the *meanings* of words and achieve the required understanding of the elliptical sentence. The Naiyāyikas attempt to end the polemics by saying that since it is a verbal cognition on the part of the hearer, the referent of each word should be presented *only* by words and not by any non-verbal means like gestures, sense-perception or memory. If the hearer supplies the missing referents of 'bring', 'me', etc., by non-verbal means, then his understanding cannot

be categorised as a verbal cognition. If somebody says 'I have a bottle' and shows me a sample of red, I may *infer* that he wants to convey the sense that he has a red bottle, but that inference would not amount to a verbal cognition; it would be a verbal cognition succeeded by an inference.[29]

Frege perhaps would not be too finicky about preserving the purely verbal character of the cognition 'Bring me a slab,' and would allow the concurrence of two kinds material mediums— the words on the one hand, and the non-verbal gestures and circumstantial events on the other—in expressing the complete thought. But what is most important is to realise that the Fregean model does not allow two unrelated and incomplete senses expressed by two different media in the first realm. While two media can concur in deriving the complete thought, it is not the concurrence per se, but the *representation of the concurrence in thought* that makes the final thought available to the hearer. So while the systems of Frege, the Naiyāyikas and the Mīmāṁsakas endorse extra-linguistic meanings as foundations of language usage, there are internal differences about the nature of this meaning. It is not clear to what extent the Fregean theory of *sense* versus *reference*, his theory of the indefinable notion of thought and truth, the demands of his context principle for the sense and reference of each expression, have their counterparts in the two Indian systems under consideration.

We can now try to figure out how Wittgenstein can gain mileage from the internal tensions amongst these three foundationalist systems. All these systems strive to keep the sign, the meaning or conveying power of signs and the referent as external foundations of usage. As already discussed extensively in the previous section, Wittgenstein on the contrary would uphold that just as the ostension and the ostended cannot be

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[29] I have followed the detailed annotation of Narayan Chandra Goswami Punditt on *Tarkasaṁgraha* and *Tarka Samgraha Dīpika* by AnnamBhatta (Kolkata: Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 1410 Bangabda) on the controversy between Naiyāyikas and Mīmāṁsakas on their respective understanding of elliptical sentences.

kept apart, the rule and the application cannot be divorced from each other, similarly the sign and its meaning, the gesture and its interpretation, the attending circumstances and their suggestions, also cannot be delinked from each other. To interpret the fragmented verbal signs as awaiting the supplementation of further signs, to interpret the non-verbal gestures and actions of the speaker as, in their turn, falling back on the incomplete array of verbal signs to bring them to a completion, betray all of them as penetrating into each other, rupturing and blending into unfounded uses. The interpretation of verbal signs falls back on gestures and actions and vice versa, clearly showing that none of these enjoys a self-interpretive content that entails a unique usage. Nor can they be formulated in terms of Fregean thoughts to be further arranged into a logical chain of propositions entailing the final conclusion, i.e., the understanding of the elliptical sentence. The purportedly self-interpretive meanings of gestures or semantic rules do not precede or explain understanding or usage, rather they themselves disperse into uses. The very notion of an elliptical sentence as conceived in the foundationalist systems presupposes an extra-linguistic reality as well as a unique extra-linguistic sense that the non-elliptical sentence is supposed to represent. The elliptical sentence, in order to be a sentence or to be a proper piece of language, has to chase the complete reality, exactly on the model of the non-elliptical. But for Wittgenstein, language does not trail behind an immaculate reality; rather, language consists in various kinds of spontaneous activities or language-games ensconced in our forms of living. The builder's game of 'Slab' is as much a spontaneous and autonomous activity as are the moves of chess or football, or 'ring a ring a roses'. Both the language-game of 'Slab' and the moves of chess are equally freed from the commitments of following a unique reality, a pre-linguistic intention, or a pre-applicational content of sense or semantic rules. Hence, an extra-linguistic reality cannot make demands of a determinate sense and a unique syntactic category for each sign, which is further supposed to determine the range of semantic and syntactic recursion for each

word from one sentence to others, from a complete sentence to an elliptical one, from the standard to its truncated versions.

According to the Augustinians, the essence of speech is the composition of names, and a word uttered in isolation is just a name which cannot be *understood*. For it is only *meaning* and not *reference* that can be understood, and meaning emerges only at the level of syntactically complete composition of words, i.e., grammatically well-formed sentences. In that case, a word occurring in isolation, if *understood*, has to be an elliptical structure leaving the full combination of words unuttered due to laziness or some other philosophically uninteresting reason. For Wittgenstein on the other hand, both reference and meaning are constructed in and through uses; the difference between the two lies in their respective modes of employment. He emphatically asserts that if 'Slab' is to be considered as the *shortening* of 'Bring me a slab,' then the latter may well be considered as a *lengthening* of the former. One may just utter 'Slab' and *mean* 'Slab' (*PI* 19, 20); one may put it to a referring use, like putting pieces on the board, which can in its turn expand into further elaborate games of description. When a piece of wood is alternatively used as a pawn or a queen in the game of chess, its identity is shaped differently in the two different uses; it makes no sense to say that each use is elliptically contained in the piece of wood. The mode of using a word also lies in the manner in which we loosen it out in the surrounding expressions and behaviours in the stream of life, and not in bringing out the hidden elements packed into its supposedly insular content. '(In Russian one says "stone red" instead of "the stone is red"; do they feel the copula to be missing in the sense, or attach it in *thought*?)' (*PI* 20). The functionality of 'Slab' works simply on the strength of functionality; all the putatively inherent content of the sentence injected into it by the rules of semantics and syntax, may be torn asunder by usage. The inner content of language explodes into the vast stretch of life in the same way as the inner material content and shape of the chess pieces explode into the vast relational network of

uses with the other pieces. It does not make sense to determine how much of material content a piece in chess should contain to make it possible for it to be placed on a board, and how much of its original material placed on a board should recur in its subsequent moves with respect to other pieces on other squares. When a pawn is used as a queen it does not make sense to ask whether or how much of the material content of the queen is transmitted to the pawn. It makes as little sense to ask for the referential identity of a word or the determinate boundaries of its alternative senses assumed to recur neatly along different contexts, from the complete to the elliptical.

One can of course object that if a language-game is not admitted to be necessarily complex with a recursible structure, it would lapse into a homogeneous sign-language like that of animals, allowing no flexibility of breaking it into a configuration with the possibility of detachment and reattachment of elements. Wittgenstein would point out that the supposed recursion of identical senses is a recursion of forms of living. What do we mean when we talk of language needing a structure to represent the external reality in a one–one correspondence? What do we mean when we say that 'Bring me a slab' has to have a recursible structure with more than one word? This talk has no ontological significance, it only has meaning in its internal contrast with other sentences containing the same words in different combinations (like 'Hand me a slab,' 'Bring two slabs,' 'Cut down the slab,' etc.). On the whole, language used as highlighting a single lump, *or* as configuring words in more and more elaborate and sophisticated combinations, is a matter of spontaneous use—where all intentions to represent, all the determinate senses and rules, all external referents—themselves disperse and dissolve into an indeterminate array of verbal and non-verbal activities, seamlessly meshed together. *Thus, the occurrence of elliptical sentences gives us a fresh occasion to appreciate that sense and reference are vague concepts* (Z 154).

2.2 *Wittgenstein's Treatment of Language-Games with Empty Names*

In *PI* 39, Wittgenstein recounts the kernel point of his own Tractarean theory as well as Russell's doctrine of names and description. Names cannot refer to non-existent objects, for then the sentences in which they figure would be meaningless.[30] So the meaningful sentences with apparently empty names would have to be paraphrased in a way that dispensed with those empty names altogether. Moreover, like Strawson in 'On Referring', Wittgenstein in *PI* 40 explicitly complains against Russell that he confounds meaning with the bearer of a name. However, let us note that this is apparently a cavil, and both Strawson and Wittgenstein should rephrase it in a more guarded manner. A more responsible version of the above objection should run as follows: It was Russell's flawed vision of an ideal language, where the bearer of the name and its meaning should coalesce together, or where they could be coalesced at least on certain occasions, that had led him to launch his dream project of an ideal language.

Now, in *PI* 41, Wittgenstein complicates the game already described in *PI* 15, where different tools are marked with different signs, and whenever the builder shows a sign to his assistant, the latter brings the appropriate tool. Wittgenstein conceives a situation where one of the tools named 'N' is broken, and not knowing this, A (the builder) gives the sign 'N' to B (the assistant). The question is whether the term 'N' has meaning and how B should respond to the situation. As Wittgenstein does not have a readymade theory of names and descriptions like Russell, and since for him reference and meaning are achieved by the respective modes of usage, he lays out some unpredictably fresh

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[30] Wittgenstein seems to express his general dissatisfaction against all philosophers who ascribe some kind of existence to empty proper names in the subject-position (Meinong), or stipulate an empty class like 0 (Frege), or turn sentences containing such names into propositional functions (Russell). See Z 61.

language-games whereby the assistant and the builder can play out their meaningfulness or otherwise. Let us note here that since for Wittgenstein there are no simple symbols or genuine names, he presents the project in terms of an appeal to our common-sense notion of *meaning* and not *reference*, deliberately avoiding the track of lapsing into technical contrivances of their distinction. What he proposes to bring out is this: shorn of the doctrinal cleavage between reference on the one hand and meaning or description on the other, what sense can we make of the empty names and of the kinds of deficits that come up in the language-games with such empty names? Wittgenstein proposes four alternatives:

(a) B stands at a loss, not knowing what to do, or shows A the pieces. Here one can say that 'N' has become meaningless, i.e., it no more has a use in our language-game unless we give it a new use. We can venture to elaborate this by constructing some other illustrations along similar lines. A gateway built to a house was given the name 'N' to signify it in relation to the entire building, so that once the gateway is broken it does not even retain its descriptive content of once being an entrance. This mode of usage rules out the possibility of 'N' being the name of that isolated doorway or our relating to that object in memory. That is, we cannot even say N was a tool before, now it is broken, for this mode of usage dissipates any identity that may come up as a referrable item. The only way to give it a meaning is to situate it in a different mode of functioning, or rather to enliven its meaning in a new language-game.

(b) N becomes meaningless because the tool was given another name, and the sign N was no longer used in that language-game. Here again it is noteworthy that the whole point of the use was to exhaust all its meaning in that particular game, not to accord it any independent descriptive content.

(c) The tool is broken, but as A unwittingly gives the sign to B, B has to shake his head in reply. It is this *use* that *wholly*

constitutes the meaning of N, and not the question of there being an immaculate entity corresponding to the name.

(d) This situation is different from all the others in the respect that 'N' was never used as a name of a tool, and both A and B know that. Yet A and B make it a convention where the former gives the sign to B, and both shake their head or laugh at a joke (*PI* 42).

Let us now juxtapose each of these options with the respective construals of Russell's and Strawson's reactions.

Russell's Reaction

(a) As N is a compound object, 'N' is not a genuine name, but a definite description. Whether N is broken or of one piece, no one could have put it to a referring use. A's gesture of showing the sign may be interpreted in terms of a uniquely existential statement with the definite description 'the tool having the name "N"'. One can also supplement the third conjunct in the form of a command statement about A's ordering and B's obeying with respect to the tool. This conjunctive statement would obviously be false, as the first conjunct is false. B's reaction can be construed as a negative existential, imposing an external negation of A's statement, and hence would be true. 'N' does not have a reference, and being a definite description, it also does not have a meaning in isolation. Again it is interesting to note here that for Wittgenstein, one does not need to reconstruct the non-verbal gestures into verbal language to decide about their meaningfulness or otherwise. Besides, even if Wittgenstein agreed on the issue of 'N' having no reference, his construal of these new modes of usage shows that its negative referential status does not determine its meaning in accordance with Russell's prescription.

(b) Since 'N' was once invested with the definite description of being the tool with the name 'N', even after that name is

withdrawn it can assume the description 'the tool that was named "N" in such and such a time span'. The exchange between A and B would be in the similar mould as explained above. Here again, for Wittgenstein, it is the *use* of N as *not* having a use in that language-game that divests it of its meaning; the descriptive content once attached to it cannot block the spontaneity of prodigally diverse uses that might come to dissipate that uniquely prescribed content.

(c) Russell can construe the convention of B's shaking head as his stating a negative existential in response to A's unique existential stated in the affirmative form. And 'N' would again be a disguised description; and perhaps to match the demands of the context as well as keeping with his own injunctions, Russell might agree to enrich the definite description as 'the tool that was named "N" in such and such a time span' and 'the tool the utterance of whose old name "N" is prescribed to be followed with a shake of the head'. But the interesting difference between Russell and Wittgenstein is that for the latter, it is the *use* of the shake of head that gives 'N' the meaning, while for Russell, once the expressions are compounded through increasing layers of complexity in accordance with the demands of ideal language, it is the semantic and syntactic rules that achieve meaning. *For Russell, use cannot add anything to that except as itself intellectualised into the descriptive content of the rule. For Wittgenstein on the other hand, whatever injunctions or prescriptions are to be made about meaning or its failure, use ultimately outstrips all such injunctions.*

(d) Both A and B are using false existential statements with empty definite descriptions knowingly. Here there is no occasion of A's uttering a false statement unknowingly and B's contradicting it. Again, it is the falsity of the statements that accord them a meaning, while for Wittgenstein it is the *use* that breathes meaning into the game, and not some dead prescriptions that equate truth-value with meaning.

Strawson's Response

(a) The commanding gesture accompanied by the word 'N',
    labours under a false presupposition about the unique
    existence of an unbroken and usable tool called 'N'. The
    falsity of the presupposition renders the order somewhat
    spurious or unsatisfiable. If the non-verbal order is translated
    into a verbal order, the latter would again be unsatisfiable,
    but meaningful. B's helplessness or puzzlement on given
    such instructions clearly shows a response to A's false
    presupposition, and not to a false *statement*. The command
    sentence has meaning, for the meaning is determined by
    the semantic and syntactic conventions pertaining to the
    words comprising the order—the conventions whereby it
    becomes possible to use the sentence to make a statement,
    or a satisfiable command on suitable occasions (i.e.,
    occasions where the tool is intact). But for Wittgenstein,
    meaning or meaninglessness is radically determined by
    use; the meaning or meaninglessness of 'N' outgrows the
    Strawsonian prescriptions of usage as being determinable
    by semantic conventions and external constraints of reality.
    For Wittgenstein, meaning or meaninglessness equates
    exhaustively with usage, it cannot be controlled by the
    rules of usage, for the rules of usage are themselves fleshed
    out in and through the usage. For Strawson, the referring
    use of proper names (as opposed to personal pronouns,
    indexicals and definite descriptions) is determined by ad
    hoc conventions, not general or lexical ones.[31] For him,
    the semantic conventions or *rules*—even the variable, non-
    lexical and ad hoc ones—have a privileged priority over
    these ad hoc uses; the variant ad hoc uses would surely
    trail behind the ad hoc *rules* made *prior* to the applications.
    And once 'N' has been accorded a meaning by ad hoc
    conventions, viz., 'the tool which is used in such and such a
    mode of functioning', it can never become meaningless, even

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[31] Strawson, 'On Referring', see especially p. 286.

when the tool is broken and the mode of functioning can no longer obtain. The name will continue to have the meaning, and it can also be put to an appropriate referring use pertaining to the past, though not in relation to the present or the future. *But for Wittgenstein, it is the peculiarity and autonomy of usage that renders 'N' meaningless, the use that bursts forth from the allegedly prior formulation of the rules claiming to contain the peculiarity of the posterior applications.*

(b) The ad hoc conventions that made 'N' meaningful at one point of time may be subsequently taken away, but that will not render 'N' meaningless. We can still put 'N' both to a referring and an attributive use: (*a*) 'N is the same tool that you now see under the name "X"'; and (*b*) 'No N can go wrong'—these are respective illustrations of both these kinds of uses. And again, Wittgenstein would insist that the referential identity of N—sought to be captured in the ad hoc semantic convention and retrievable in memory—is not prior to usage; rather it takes its shape in and through usage. *If usage has the autonomy to shape its meaning, then usage also has the autonomy to withdraw it from the semantic network, independent of any explicit formulation.* To repeat the point we have already made: taking back the meaning we have given to a particular word by a subsequent rule, viz., '"N" which was given the meaning of being xyz, it is now decided, will be withdrawn from circulation', obviously will not work to make it meaningless, for we can go on referring to N in this way and reflect on its past meaning, compare its two different statuses over the passage of time. That itself gives meaning to 'N' that was sought to be made meaningless. But what Wittgenstein proposes again is the groundlessness of uses that renders a word meaningless, not falling back on an explicit *rule* to withdraw its meaning.

(c) Strawson can again take A as giving a command under a false presupposition of the unique existence of the unbroken tool

called 'N', and take B as correcting that false presupposition with a negative existential statement. Both the order and the response taken in the form of sentences have meanings—though the former does not have a truth-value. But for Wittgenstein, it is this non-verbal use independent of any semantic rule—ad hoc or otherwise—that makes it meaningful.

(d) How would Strawson respond to this use of A's uttering the word 'N' which has never been used for a tool in the context of some construction work where N has no relevance, and B's responding with a shake of head—all in the form of a joke? Strawson can (and perhaps will) discount it as a purposeless and stupid activity not worthy of any philosophical attention. But we may try to extract a more interesting response, that of both A and B knowingly engaging in an exchange of sentences that are category-mistaken, as a form of verbal joke, without any claim of making a statement. For Strawson, category-mistaken sentences are without meaning, as he suggests quite clearly.[32] The introduction of the category mistake naturally invites a comparison with Wittgenstein's notion of grammar, and with it the obvious problem as to how Wittgenstein can allow meaning to a language-game that deliberately conflates grammars. We can venture to suggest that such deliberate conflation of grammars is itself a language-game, and furthermore, stands with the normal games with standard grammar. This is significantly comparable with the fact that lying falls under the same genre of language-game as telling the truth. It is this deliberate displacement of a word with a suggested contrast with what it is not—all in the form of a joke—that gives 'N'

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[32] Strawson, *Introduction to Logical Theory*, chapter 2, subsection 5. Here Strawson explains the notion of the range of significance for the substitution of the appropriate value, though he concedes that in some exceptional cases one cannot decide whether a particular substitution instance will fall within or beyond that range.

a meaning and even a reference—the latter activating the starting point of a discourse.[33]

Russell demanded that the ontological constraint of logical atoms, atomic and molecular facts, etc., determined logically proper names as necessarily having bearers, i.e., their meanings as necessarily collapsing with their bearers. And this for him implied that ordinary names *qua* incomplete expressions have a meaning (*within* a proposition) and not a reference. Now since there are no absolute simples, Wittgenstein ironically states that nothing stops us from using names in a way that sharply reverses Russellian prescriptions. He further suggests that one can not only play referring games with empty names, but can also subvert the Russellian demand with so-called ordinary proper names—to the contrary demand that they will be used *only* when

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[33] A category-mistaken sentence like 'Green ideas sleep furiously' can roll out in an array of other category-mistaken sentences, like 'All ideas that sleep furiously can run like a horse,' 'Therefore this idea can also run like a horse,' etc. Such sentences can be put together in what seems like a logical connection, or one can run such a series just with the pure stance of seeing how far one can carry out a recursion of category-mistaken expressions along category-mistaken sentences. Donnellan in his article 'Reference and Definite Descriptions' sought to show that one can legitimately use sentences with empty names occurring in the subject-position to make statements, questions and commands. He illustrates that two people can use the expression 'the king' to refer to a person whom they fully know to be an impostor—all in the spirit of a joke. See ibid., p. 56. This use throws up some impressive similarity with Wittgenstein's example of the joking employment with the empty name 'N'. However, we do not see any tendency in Donnellan's arguments to stretch the referring use of empty names or empty definite descriptions to a referring use of category-mistaken expressions. All we want to suggest is that if one can validly use definite descriptions to refer to an object having blatantly opposed attributes, one can also perhaps venture to make a referring use with definite descriptions that are not only semantically empty, but also flagrantly mismatched with the broad grammatical category of its associated expressions.

they have a bearer. In other words, this amounts to a demand that they should be used as indexicals and demonstratives. In showing how use outstrips all definitions and ontologisations, Wittgenstein also demonstrates that use will not land us in something extra-linguistic, i.e., using names as demonstratives will not land us in extra-linguistic realities (*PI* 44).

Wittgenstein does resist all attempts to turn names into demonstratives and vice versa. While we say 'This is called Ram,' we never say 'This is called this' (*PI* 38). Demonstratives like 'this' and 'that' are used with a gesture of pointing, while names like 'Ram' and 'Shyam' are not used with gestures of pointing, but are explained by means of such gestures (*PI* 45). However, as we have seen, these means are not wheels that are external to and yet glide us smoothly to the destination, but themselves are conceptually loaded with the destination.

In fine, success and failure in meaning and reference obtain *within* language-games. The speaker and the hearer sharing the emptiness of empty names play out the success and failure of their meaning and reference in a commonly shared language-game. It is not that the name confronts both of them with an ontological vacuity in one case, while in the other case links them with a pre-applicational status of semantic rules ensuring the shared meaning and reference.

3. Grammar and Facts

Grammatical categories are often conceived as providing a scaffolding for pre-given facts, and in this sense grammar is claimed as being justified by facts. In other words, grammar is conceived as cutting soil to explore pre-given routes from one pre-given point to another. But to claim that grammar cuts paths through pre-given facts, or that sortal concepts scaffold paths through pre-given soil (discovering or hauling up paths which were obscured by natural contingencies) does not amount to a valid proposition. It makes as little sense as to say that there is a space given as an external container, coagulated into inert

and stationary objects in certain regions, and our grammar joins them up by tracking down and paving up those hidden tracks—hidden but pre-existent as stationary routes between stationary points of space. For Wittgenstein, the notions of foundations of language, necessity, absolute velocity and that of an external space with pre-existent paths and voids among its stationary points, make sense only within language-games—within its contrastive uses. There is no route that can take us from language to extra-linguistic entities (be it absolute necessity, absolute velocity or an absolute external space with real paths and voids connecting or disconnecting its real contents).

Let us try to clarify the dynamism of this internal contrast of language-games with the help of two crucial expressions—'pre-given fact' on the one hand, and 'pre-given soil with concepts cutting alternative paths and voids amongst them'. First, to take the metaphor of 'concepts scaffolding facts', the only sense that we can make of such observations is again an intra-linguistic harmony between facts and the scaffolding concepts. Wittgenstein explains that if certain facts were *imagined* otherwise or *described* otherwise, then one can 'no longer imagine the application of certain concepts, because the rules for their application have no analogue in the new circumstance' (*Z* 350, italics added). The notion of pre-given facts formatted or scaffolded by supposedly subsequent concepts only makes sense by forging an internal split *within* the notion of fact—the split between two modes of description of facts, the standard and the deviant one. This split projects the *appearance* of a pre-given fact *beyond* description, untouched by, and unavailable to, different modes of scaffolding by concepts. It is the same way that 'understanding the notion of absolute velocity' can be made meaningful by contriving different hierarchies *within* space, in which the velocity of the planets at each level is subjected to the surveillance of the planets on the immediately higher level—the gradations laid out in an indefinite array. It is the same way that the talk of untouched soil cut into alternative paths can be made to make sense, by internally destabilising the notion of soil into

different modes of conceptualisation. There is no pure referential identity of pre-given facts, prior to its description or imagination in different modes, standard or deviant. Wittgenstein seeks to strengthen this insight by bringing the notion of jurisprudence into the scenario. Let us repeat that there is no pre-given fact on which jurisprudence applies its legal judgements. The idea of this external fact of living organisms and their voluntary actions juts out only by contrasting this notion with an alien life with a deviant mode of living. There is no pre-conceptual life that is imagined or described under two modes of normalcy and deviance (*Z* 350).

Moreover, it is crucially important to realise that the logical split seemingly invoked between the description of pre-given facts and application of concepts cannot hold ground in the long run—the standard and the deviant descriptions of facts do not *entail*, but *constitute* the standard and deviant application of concepts respectively. The facts of human life and voluntary actions are not given out there ready for the jurisprudent to apply his legal judgements. Human actions could not have been identified unless they were already imbued with volitional adverbs and moral attributes. Similarly, imagining alien forms of living and action is not prior to an encounter with the vacuity of our standard moral categories with respect to these organisms; rather, these two engagements are one and the same. In the same fashion, the human agreement too does not found the application of concepts. '"If humans were not in general agreed about colours of things, if undetermined cases were not exceptional, then our concept of colour could not exist." No:—our concept *would* not exist' (*Z* 351). The foundational split between human agreement and the application of concepts sought to be invoked by the tool of counterfactual logic with the help of the word 'could' is thus displaced by 'would'.

The oft-quoted observation at *PI* p. 230 is to be interpreted along this line. There are two phases through which we should navigate our reading of this section. On a preliminary reading, Wittgenstein seems to be admitting general facts of nature, which

as causal antecedents trigger off our concepts, without entering into semantics, in the shape of either reference or description. If the edges of the things fused regularly, it would have *caused* us to formulate our grammatical paradigm of number as 2 + 2 = 3; if our neurological system and the environment were of a different nature, we might have perceived things to have different colours, shapes and textures, or perhaps even different quantitative boundaries. Such conjectures would be the subject-matter of scientific hypotheses, and this would indeed constitute an extremely complex and engrossing exercise of constructing fictitious natural histories, formulating different counterfactuals, recasting the standard laws of perception and environment and working out their exciting consequences. But Wittgenstein reminds us that our concepts are not parasitic on these facts of nature, *qua* their status as external causal antecedents. The simple reason that we can read our perceptions in different ways shows that our concepts or the grammatical paradigms we employ do not mirror reality, i.e., they do not trail behind external and real happenings which might have *caused* or *sparked off* these perceptions. As we have already noted in section 1, our grammar is a *means of representing* reality—having the spontaneity and autonomy of adopting different means of representation (*PG*, pp. 88, 184, *PI* 371–73). To take common examples, we can read our 'normal' perception of the blue sky as actually being a mass illusion, we can freely alternate between a disintegrated and lopsided appearance of objects as being due to some distorting factors in our perceptual mechanism or as being due to the real nature of things. We can see the phenomenon of a hurled stone falling back on the ground—as tracking through empty space in a parabola—under the Newtonian constraints of gravity and inertia; or we can see it as taking the shortest route through a space which is already curved in the Einsteinian vision. There are no self-identical referents that persist as constants across all these different paradigms of representation. We are at liberty to prioritise different alternatives as the starting point of our discourse, i.e., as the preferred frame of our reference.

It is in this sense that reference is not a causal antecedent mechanically constraining us from without. To realise that reference is embedded in the autonomy of concepts is also to realise that there are no concepts that are unique or absolute, so that 'that having different ones would mean not realising something that we realise'. When we are said to be capable of imagining 'certain general facts of nature to be different from what they are', this autonomy inexhaustibly boils down to the autonomy of operating different kinds of concepts, which are not constrained by the putative presence of pre-conceptual facts. I shall further argue that Wittgenstein's apparent concession of a pre-linguistic cause triggering off our reference (and perhaps certain irreversible modes of description) from without is itself a matter of language-games—an internal contrast between the inbuilt externality and contingency of causal games and the circular closure woven into the reason games.[34]

Wittgenstein further argues that experience does not push us headlong against certain brute pre-conceptual facts, hitherto undiscovered, compelling us to change our concepts. He qualifies such statements by saying that it is a fact that humans change their mode of orientation—reshuffle the zones of demarcation, blur categorical differences into differences of degree. This is what the seeming discovery of new facts amounts to (*Z* 352–53). These observations seem to reduce the acclaimed real distinction among different substances and different colours into mere grammatical correlates, i.e., turn the genus–species distinctions into an intra-linguistic contrast. Our use of the words 'substance' and 'colour' does not point to an ontological plurality of substances and colours, but 'the concept "substance" presupposes the concept of "difference of substance"'. (As the concept of a king in chess presupposes that of its move in chess, the concept of *colour* also presupposes that of *colour-s* in the plural [*Z* 353].) From this he goes on to make the very important observation that the proposed conceptual

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[34] See next chapter, section 1.4.

links or gaps (between numbers, colours, substances) are not physical, they are only geometrical (*Z* 354). This observation also enables us to transit smoothly from Wittgenstein's analysis of fact-metaphor to space-metaphor. We can read this as: There is neither a real path nor a real gap between two points of space, for the points and paths are not *in* space, they *are* space; hence the talk of discovering paths or the absence of paths between points of space does not make sense. To Wittgenstein's comment just noted, we can add that the concept of space presupposes the concept of spaces, and similarly, the singular number of' 'path' and 'point' presupposes the textbook grammatical shift to their use in the plural. To make sense of the talk of concepts cutting paths or abhorring them is to turn space into geometrical abstractions; not in the Kantian model of shifting the description of space to a description of a priori forms of mind, but through a particular model of usage. It is in the same way that we form numerical paradigms, not through describing a pre-given domain of mind, but through the repetitive ritual of turning experience into a motion picture of aspectual transition. The path between a triangle and the sum of two right angles is a geometrical path, and the gap between a square and a circle is a geometrical repugnance. All these paths and gaps are norms or ways of representing space; they do not trail real paths and real voids in space. Similarly, the paths and gaps between colours are also ways of representing colour, not retracing the real links and gaps between colours.

Wittgenstein does not shirk the inevitable question that arises at this juncture: 'But doesn't anything physical correspond to it? (*Z* 355) He oscillates between two possible responses to this question. First he suggests that this purported correspondence consists in our habituation to certain concepts; and then immediately qualifies this by saying that what ultimately remains as the extremely important fact of *nature*, is that the technique of teaching concepts underdetermines the applications, i.e., it underdetermines what a person might find to be *natural* and what *unnatural*. *On ultimate analysis, it is the naturalness or*

unnaturalness in the mode of action that persists as the fact of nature. There is no lump in space that constrains one kind of action rather than another.[35]

The most profitable way to go along with Wittgenstein is to look at colour, number and substance *as* space. That is to say, we need to look at red and green *as* space, as colour-spaces and not as *in* space, and thus the doggedly persisting physicality of the links and gaps can now be meaningfully seen as geometrical norms of representing colours. Just as there are no real points of space that are either connected by real paths, or delinked by real absence of paths, similarly colours are not fixed points *in* colour-space, from which real links or paths take off. It is generally claimed that while green is a stationary point or terminus in colour-space, bluish green is a path between two points. Confounding a path with a point, or more aptly, confounding two separate given points (red and green) with reddish green (a weird path or an absence of path between them) is actually a tension between a standard path and a different path (a wilderness or a 'no thoroughfare'). At *Z* 362, Wittgenstein observes that a sentence that 'there *is* no such thing as reddish green' is extraordinary in so far as it carries a reference to a real void between red and green. There are no stationary points of space, and there are no stationary points of colour. The so-called stationary points of colour are all fused in roads, all supposedly given terminus of concepts are fused in concepts (perhaps unusual ones). Wittgenstein navigates the discussion to the following question: are these weird roads (like reddish green, 2 + 2 = 3) empirically impassable, or are they voids or non-existence of roads? That is, are they non-navigable, non-thoroughfares, or are they geometrically impossible? (*Z* 356) As it does not make sense to talk of voids or absence of roads, or of real points in space delinked by real gaps, what exactly turns out to be the significance of this distinction? Or

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[35] Further elaboration of Wittgenstein's notion of space will be taken up in the next chapter in relation to the views of McDowell.

what exactly is the distinction between empirical propositions and grammatical propositions? Here we bump into a typically philosophical polemic, groping with the dubious status of the empirically given versus the suggested autonomy and creativity of the concepts applied to the given. Wittgenstein rephrases the polemic as: do the systems of colour and number reside in *our* nature or in the nature of things? (Z 357)

I deliberately follow Wittgenstein's metaphor of cutting soil with concepts into paths, hoping that these spatial idioms of points and path, extended to colours, numbers and sensations, will create a new way to break out of this traditional impasse. The points, paths and voids are not *in* space, similarly the systems of colour and number are not *in* the nature of things. On the other hand, can we say that the points, paths and voids are *outside* space? No, for they *are* space; the question of their lying *outside* space and in *our* nature does not arise. For that would mean that our concepts, though they *are* outside space, somehow project the points, path and voids *in* space. Alternatively, we and the external world constitute *two* kinds of spaces with a void in between, and our projective mechanisms function across the void. The further alternative of there being a noumenon *beyond* space and time, and our receiving manifold in the a priori forms of space and time, too is not a workable proposition, for obviously the proposition itself is enmeshed in space-time idioms.

Thus, the philosophical standpoint claiming that the system of space is not in the outer world, but in our nature, cannot be cashed out in any of the suggested alternatives. What turns out to be the meaningful remnant is the insight that space itself extends into human subjects and their activities; it is *not* that space and objects exist beforehand, to locate us in their container so to speak, with the contained objects providing the external grounds for our actions to start off. It is this key to the solution that we need to apply to the cases of colour and number as well. These systems too are not in the nature of things, in the sense of there being terminal points in the coloured and numbered objects, and

there being real paths between deep blue and light blue, and there being a real void between the two terminal and discrete points of red and green. It is also obviously absurd to speak of numbers as terminal points residing in certain collections of objects, and there being real paths between 2 + 2 and 4, and real voids between 2 + 2 and 3. Similarly, it does not make sense of our nature being outside space and projecting these conceptual mechanisms across the intervening void.

One may of course object that the way one can ascribe meaningfulness or meaninglessness to the talk of space cannot readily be carried over to the talk about colours and numbers. To take the case of colour specifically—we do not talk of there being paths or voids between two colours; rather, we speak of similarity and dissimilarity. Our response to such objections would be to remind ourselves of the obvious point that colour is *spaced*, or rather, colour *is* space. We turn the coloured reality into flat surfaces with saturated pigments or into three-dimensional blocks. It is an imagined projection of a supposedly real essence of red, forsaking all its depth, dimension and hue, and gradually ossifying into flat pigments or chromatically opaque blocks. This gradual ossification of real colour and shape into artificial models can be visually constructed in a cinematographic model. Such exercises create an aspectual transition—a process of dispersal and reversal between real colours and constructed models. Reality is, in a manner of speaking, squeezed into flat pigments, only to extend back to its real chrome—the former is seen to emerge into the latter, and yet the new emergence is seen as identical with the old. In this way four primary colours are created as four terminal points, with a void in between— and each point is made to undergo internal ramifications or paths, i.e., the internal differences between shades. But this does not mean that the real world of coloured objects have these four terminal points with real discordance (voids) and similarities (paths) in between. In this sense, the system of colour does not reside in the nature of things, i.e., in the supposedly external space, which our grammatical paradigms are expected

to represent. Rather, the system of colour is constructed *as* grammatical paradigms.

However the next question that may arise is whether gaps and links do obtain in the new reality, constructed with flat pigments. We push Wittgenstein's arguments to the extreme direction, where the talk of the colour system being in the nature of things cannot meaningfully be applied even with respect to the contrived world with artificial pigments. For even the flat pigments which have to be placed in real space are not given as really flat, concentrated chunks. To regard the pigments as concentrated terminal points, unbreakable into further divisions, is as absurd as to speak of terminal spots of space as indivisible and non-navigable lumps. Take a flat square patch of a so-called homogeneous, saturated yellow pigment. What if one breaks it into several yellow spots joined up with intermediate shades, as it is likely to appear beneath a microscope. What if one sees the boundary blurring into the intermediate shades of its surroundings? One can further see it as a conglomeration of different blotches of light and shade. And as we cannot speak of terminal points of colour, we cannot also speak of paths and voids between them. Nor can we say that the system of colour and number is in *our* nature, for then we are saddled with the same absurdity of my being outside space and applying the spatial colour-system to an unspaced homogeneity.

We can now better grasp what Wittgenstein said in *Z* 349. Just as it does not make sense to talk of terminal points in space and paths or voids between them, similar remarks apply to the proposal of maintaining the identities of paths as distinct from one another. As already suggested, the distinction between points, paths and voids can somehow be made in terms of internal contrasts between usable, negotiable paths on the one hand and unused wilderness or fallow lands on the other—the latter projected as stationary lumps of space. '[But] it becomes very difficult to describe paths (of thought) where there are already many lines (of thought) already laid down' (*Z* 349). To put it more explicitly, when there are one or very

few roads actually constructed, the difference between uncut soil and the roads carved out of it can hold us in sway; but when the natural soil or the spatial expanse is cut up into too many roads—on the earth's surface, underground, underwater, or through the air—then the uncut soil, water and air, as well as the tools for cutting roads, and finally the apparent gaps between the different routes, inevitably blend together. *If one starts with the metaphor of concepts scaffolding facts, there will be interminably different ways of scaffolding—blurring the distinction between the scaffolder and scaffolded, paths and points, the conceptual paths and the unconceptualised given. As a result it would no longer be possible to maintain the prima facie distinction between the different concepts or paths of thought—the distinction between walking along the paths and falling into the grooves in between. All spaces get sucked into the paths, leaving no unpathed terminus behind, no apparently fixed nodes for the network to start off. In that case, the talk of grammar scaffolding facts into paths can no longer be projected as making sense.*

Thus Wittgenstein dissolves the distinction between systems of colour or number as being in the nature of things *and* being in *our* nature, and therewith the dichotomy between 'arbitrary' and 'non-arbitrary' (*Z* 358). As soon as the apparent arbitrariness of grammar, as not being grounded in the nature of things, starts to make sense, the meaninglessness of the alternative talk of *our nature* imposing the paths of thought *from without* deprives it of its apparent meaning. And as we have seen, nothing much can be gained from the claim of the non-arbitrariness of grammar, as long as it is phrased in terms of scaffolding pre-given space into paths and voids. Rather, the meaning of 'non-arbitrariness' has to be encashed in terms of human subjects and activities as being an extension of space and not projecting paths *on* space from without. Grammar is 'akin both to what is arbitrary and to what is non-arbitrary' (*Z* 358).

The proposed dichotomy between grammar being in the nature of *things* versus it's being in *our* nature can be further

flattened out with the illustration of sensations. It is more obvious that sensations cannot be given as terminal points among which we can draw paths or gaps, carve lines of concordance or discord. Suppose we take three red sensations, *a*, *b* and *c*, and compare them in terms of their intensity or protensity—claiming that *a* is between *b* and *c*, nearer to *b* than to *c*. Now again intensity is not given as a terminal, throwing out linear degrees of comparison with other sensations around. The sensation *b* may be more intense than *a* in terms of its depth, while being less intense in terms of hue or radiance; *b* may be more protended than *a* in terms of its dynamic expanse, but *a* may be more protended in terms of its static stability, *a* may have a greater horizontal surface expanse, whereas *b* may overwhelm *a* with its vertical progression down the inner layers of our skin. Thus, any project of finding a sensation between *a* and *b*, even if the criterion is specified, cannot be grounded on terminal points and actual paths of comparison laid out there.

Let us consider commands like: 'Produce a sensation between "this" and "this", nearer to the first than the second.' Or 'Name two sensations which "this" is in between' (*Z* 363). These examples present a fresh occasion to appreciate that an indexical or demonstrative like 'this' does not pin down a sensation as a stationary referent, from which one can dig paths of similarity or dissimilarity. Rather, 'this' is a word already loaded with a specific grammar or line of thought, projected in its alternative aspects of internality and externality. Nor can we say that it is *we* who impose these lines of similarities and dissimilarities on the terminal points of given sensations. What possible content can we ascribe to this claim? Would this world of *given* sensations amount to a vast skeletal inner expanse, without colour, without depth, and yet equipped with flat slot or outlines, in which we pour colours, squeeze in or spread them out to meet with the various criteria of intensity, protensity, viz., the various criteria of describing sensations? Such suggestions invoke two spaces—the empty skeleton of bare sensations and our mind constituting the second space, internally external to

and formatting the first. No doubt such imageries lapse into a meaninglessness almost as soon as they start.[36]

It is this imagery of two spaces, with a void in between, across which the second space imposes schemes on the former, that the entire philosophical claim of 'grammar scaffolding facts' had started. As such imageries are seen to make no sense, the second space, which we may call the mediating or the scaffolding space, is turned into mind—an entity fundamentally different, and yet conceived in the same spatial model of an inner one-dimensional line. The idea of a private conceptual scheme, private grammar or private language no doubt takes off from here. The Augustinian conception of language, stuck with the opacity of physical ostension, takes its last resort in the inner ostension to the supposedly transparent terminal points of sensations and images. But as we see, the supposed transparency of images and sensations soon gives way under the pressure of different grammars, different paths of conceiving them, thus invoking a further split within the inner space of sensations themselves. As we shall see in the next chapters, it is the proliferation of further and further spaces that breaks the acclaimed insularity of a non-spatial space—the purely one-dimensional temporality of private mind, private grammar, private description and finally a private reference. We can say along with McDowell that this flawed conception of a conceptual or grammatical intermediary scaffolding facts into paths and gaps is the same as the idea of a private language. Wittgenstein's critique of private language is not an extension of his critique of the mediatory conception of grammar; rather, these two critiques boil down to the same.[37]

The predictably pertinent question comes up: 'Yes, but has nature nothing to say here? Indeed she has—but she makes herself audible in another way' (Z 364). What is this way? Wittgenstein answers: 'It is not running up against existence and non-existence

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[36] In the very next chapter, I shall present a contemporary psychological account of pre-conceptual sensations, claimed as visual referents, to follow it up with an elaborate Wittgensteinian critique.

[37] See next chapter, section 2.2.

somewhere. It means running up against facts, not concepts.' In the light of our adopted mode of analysis, we have to read this observation, not as taking us back to pre-conceptual facts out there to be scaffolded by concepts, or to terminal points of space lying ready for concepts to cut paths amongst them. Here there is no question of running up against concepts in the sense of running up against real paths, and therewith stumbling against real voids. And the *facts* we run up against are *that* we navigate certain paths and find certain other paths non-navigable—say a route through a fallow land, or digging a tunnel underwater or underground, or a route through the air. Within each kind of pathway there are internal differences of navigability and non-navigability, say an air pilot avoiding routes with air pockets. What is a *fact* is *that* we call certain colours 'reddish yellow' and do not do so in the case of reddish green. To repeat, this quoted observation does not imply that there is a real conceptual path running between red and yellow and a real vacuum between red and green. The insertion of 'somewhere' in the quotation above is supposed to signify that it is not that the paths and voids lurk 'somewhere' *in* space, waiting for us to be explored. To say that we do not read a path straight off between red and green (*Z* 365) may be taken somewhat literally to mean that we do not read those paths which are under the ground, under water, or those which, though running on the surface, deviate too much from the straight line. Again, these spatial metaphors are repeatedly used to wean us away from the idea of real points, real paths and their real absence.

Wittgenstein seeks to accentuate this insight in terms of some specific illustrations about colour and sensations, throwing a sharper light on the dubious dichotomy between colour-systems being in the nature of things versus their being in human nature. In *Z* 368, he gives an account of people who describe intermediate shades, say between red and yellow, in terms of fractions in binary notation—like R, LLRL, and the like, where we have red at the extreme left and yellow at the extreme right. From their very childhood they pick out, mix colours or describe

shades of colour in this way. We may venture to suggest that they have a way of playing the primitive referring games with colour that is different from the way *we* do in the course of our learning and teaching primary colours. Generally speaking, these people take things piecemeal, and then seek to combine them without the verb or standard parts of speech, i.e., without the ordinary syntax, rather like the primitive games of the builder and his assistant. The significant upshot of this illustration is this: there is no real path between red and orange via the shade of yellow, there is no sliding slope taking you from red to orange. Also, these people do not miss out on that slippery reality when they describe mixed shades in terms of fractions. Wittgenstein draws our attention to the fact that even *our* children never paint highlights or reflections, and also to the phenomenon of a painter apparently turning flat pigments of watercolour and oil colour into light and shade reflections and subliminal hues. He invites us to appreciate how we see the flat and fine streaks of colour placed by a deft painter side by side on the canvas, as a blended slippery zone of colours where none of the separate streaks stand out in isolation. But what looks to us as a slippery zone is for *them* an array of separate streaks, which they name separately and then describe as per their configuration.

Wittgenstein further says that the relation between these people and us is comparable to the relation between people with absolute pitch and people lacking them. We know that the difference in the relative vibration frequency of the human voice is called pitch, which contributes to the total meaning of speech. The utterance of a word in a particular pitch is situated in a pattern of variation in the ups and downs of the pitch of the other words; without this relational structure human speech would have lost its distinctive quality. But here Wittgenstein observes that these people who read colours in binary fractions are like people with absolute pitch. Perhaps Wittgenstein suggests that the natural undulation of pitch with different parts of speech, the layout of the syntactic structure corresponding to the relational structure of frequency vibration, is absent in the

typically Augustinian model of speech, where every word is on an equal footing with others, every word is posed as designating an object—which are then combined in descriptions or full sentences. All words are placed on the same pedestal side by side, there is no structural interplay, no switching of relative priorities of one word over the other in different contexts. Once again we have to remind ourselves that these relational structures of different words or parts of speech are not laid out in reality—a structure which a sentence is supposed to trail behind. Nor is this piecemeal approach (adopted by these deviant users) to every particle of a sentence more faithful to reality. To validate the possibility of this particular mode of speech, one does not need to uphold it in imagination, one does not need to form a full-fledged mental picture of the fractional representation of colour, or of the homogeneous name-designation model with absolute pitch. One just needs to flesh out such imageries in an expansive network of practices, in a cohesive form of life, and it is precisely this that *we* cannot do, '(w)e just don't see a *society* of such people' (*Z* 372), i.e., we cannot enact this deviant way of seeing.

In the same paragraph, Wittgenstein raises the question whether these people, who see colours as fragmented, who put all words into a homogeneous model of reference bereft of a dynamic interplay, can be said to suffer from an incomplete vision, tattered, torn and degenerate, the mark of the feeble-minded. Wittgenstein says that the fruitful way to look at their behaviour is not to see it as a disorder, but as a primitive order. We need to be careful to note that a talk of primitive behaviour would have no suggestions of being most proximate to reality. Primitive orders may best be understood as primitive language-games played by the builder and his assistant, where the latter does not know how to integrate the building materials into a more complex structure, or better, the machine-illiterate person who sees all the handles of a locomotive as uniform external projections, without the slightest idea as to how these seeming projections are organically embedded into the mechanism.

Similarly, a person who responds to the order '5 red apples' by posing referents of each word (*PI* 1) or sees colours in a fractional notation, plays his language-game in the style of putting each word at the rudimentary stage of a starting point; where the word does not get into the multiple layers of absorption with other expressions, it is not interwoven into the thick configurations of syntax. But this does not mean that such uses are stuck with words as isolated from each other. Rather, the words are situated in a simpler mode of description, comparable to the activity of laying the blocks side by side, not cementing them or grinding them to explore a more sophisticated way of congregation. Reference is said to be the starting point of a language-game, but it can be characterised as a starting point only in relation to the idea of a journey and its destination The path with the full details of its trajectory and the procedure of navigation is not laid out in the starting point; the latter is rather fleshed out bit by bit in and through the actual journey. It is only after one reaches the destination that one fathoms the starting point in relation to the end.

That the language-games of the primitive order do not in any way amount to cutting up space into two-dimensional surfaces, is something that we need to reflect upon at this juncture. Going along with Edwin A. Abbott, we may try to fathom what exactly this two-dimensional perception would look like.[38] He conceives a plane with the minimal depth, characterises it as 'Flatland', and explains that perception in this plane would be like seeing objects only on edge, and sensing only their periphery, not their curvature, shape or volume. The situation is like viewing from the edge of a flat table, where a number of paper cut-outs of squares and circles are laid flat on the tabletop, so that one gets only the edges or borders, or at best the projected surface areas, not their interior volume. If a three-dimensional object, say a tree, happens to pierce through this Flatland, its inhabitants

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[38] Edwin A. Abbott uses this imagery in his book *Flatland*, but I have derived this via Jones, *Physics as Metaphor*, chapter 3.

would see it only in disconnected fragments. An inhabitant would perhaps see only the projected surfaces from a particular angle, and there is perhaps no scope of going around the space to figure out the figure enclosures and their volumes even in two dimensions. There is no question of the Flatlanders having the further idea as to how these disconnected lines might be integrated into branches and progressively to the full-fledged single tree.

In the first case (of seeing objects from the edge of a table), there is no option of raising one's head and body, run through the third dimension of space alongside the table to see the actual shape and volume of the shapes kept on it. The second case of seeing the tree is apparently like being stuck in front of an opaque wall, and being constrained to look through a narrow slit on the wall, where even if the object is moved up and down, rotated along its sides in front the viewer's eyes, she will not be able to discern these disconnected edges as constituting a single object. To raise one's head to see the shapes on the table, or to break open the wall into the three-dimensional reality beyond, the viewer herself would have to reside in a three-dimensional world with a three-dimensional body, both of which provisions are withdrawn from the Flatlander hypothesis. Wittgenstein's examples of people playing a primitive game with fragmentary colours cannot obviously be compared with those of the Flatlanders, literally having a two-dimensional body living on a two-dimensional plane. Nor do these primitive games compare with being forced to see through the edges of the table or through the slits of a wall. Even within the supposed confinement, the inhabitant's tactual and muscular sensations would give her an adequate idea of the three-dimensional spaces around the table, or on both sides of the intervening wall with slits. Besides, the Flatlander's perception designed by Ouspensky is built on a semantically transparent reality in three dimensions—the very notion Wittgenstein is trying to problematise.

I use this occasion to reinstate that our languages do not have a unique semantics and syntax that trail behind a unique reality.

That is to say, language does not faithfully trace pre-given objects and the paths laid down among them, tracking the real links and avoiding the real gaps, so to speak. The unstructured or what we may call the syntactically dead expressions, like 'Three red apples' or 'Slab', are not elliptical, their functionality does not fall back on a pre-functionally unique reality that has already inserted its complete mark surreptitiously into the apparently incomplete sentences.

I shall wind up this section with an account of grammatical paradigms of sensations—with the provocative autonomy of pain illustrated in *Z* 380–90. Here Wittgenstein considers two tribes that have a different concept of pain. While pains associated with physical injury are placed under the standard concept of pain, what we consider to be 'pain' and yet is without any external physical injury is not considered as pain and is treated with ridicule by these people. How would this deviant grammar of 'pain' be treated in the Augustinian model? In this model, words designate extra-linguistic objects out there, pin down terminal points, trail behind the real paths among them, avoid the real voids. When it comes to designating pain, the words designate inner states faithfully following the ontological pattern of pain-genus and pain-species. Whenever there is a slippery zone between two sub-variations of pain, pain-language should also faithfully slide down the slippery path of pain-reality. According to the Augustinian model, the language of this tribe which refuses to go along with the real similarity between these two species of pain, which leaves out this real slide between pain 1 and pain 2, is doing a disservice to reality.

Now how would Wittgenstein demonstrate that it is absurd to talk of a primordial essence of pain that bifurcates in two paths—pain 1 (associated with injury) and pain 2 (associated with none), with a real slippery zone in between? Particularly when the infants born in this community feel pain in both cases, and show the same kind of behaviour on both occasions? Wittgenstein suggests that what seems to be essentially the same behaviour is actually two different streams; the supposed

behavioural essence dissipates into two different response systems where they are integrated in two different ways. For Wittgenstein, mentalistic terms do not designate mental states, which in their turn are expressed in behaviours. Rather, pain is internalised in pain-behaviour, and pain-language is a sophisticated extension of the latter (*PI* 243–315). In the case under consideration, the first kind of behaviour extends into pain-language, the second kind does not.

This grammar of pain is indeed difficult to digest, and Wittgenstein holds that it is not a drastic remedy but a slow and slippery path of cure that would wean us from this Augustinian malady of thought. It is by gradual dissipation of the mental essence of pain into pain-behaviour, and the progressive dispersion of the pain-behavioural essence into expansive ways of life, that Wittgenstein seeks to break the myth of the pre-linguistic reality of pain with its genus-species structure. For this he introduces the example of another tribe where the people are subjected to a severe training of suppressing the behavioural manifestation of pain or any kind of feeling. For them, genuine pain-expression and shamming are put on the same footing, their difference is as trivial as the difference between murder by two bullets or by one; and both these expressions are subjected to the same mode of ridicule and punishment. For Wittgenstein, it is not that the primordial feeling of pain is deprived of designation by pain-language, and its fundamental difference from shamming-behaviour is perversely obscured. Rather, expressive behaviour is turned into suppressive behaviour in both cases. But are not the behaviours essentially different in these two cases? Here Wittgenstein would suggest that just as objects and sensations (of colour, taste, pain) have no terminal essence, so do behaviours. Any inherent core of behaviour would rupture into the surrounding network of responses and interactions, and in this case both genuine pain-behaviour and shamming are lived out in the set of values and beliefs, considered to be in the same category of moral wrongness.

Besides, it is not that these people lack supposedly extra-linguistic qualities like scruples and consideration due to which they lack the appropriate linguistic expressions to represent the common essences between the two kinds of pain—with or without injury—and the essential difference between genuine pain-behaviour and shamming. For Wittgenstein, '[A] language-game does not originate in *consideration*. Consideration is part of a language-game' (*Z* 391). In other words, these conceptual routes between what we hold as two kinds of pain or conceptual gaps between pain and shamming are *within* language-games.

Further, when we consider the case of miming pain, we come to realise that this also does not take off from the supposedly primordial essence of pain. Miming pain in this community is not giving a spontaneous expression of the core essence of one's pain-experience, just as a dog trained to give out an appropriate whine of pain does not imitate its conscious experience of pain. Miming pain is only a talent for picking up languages. This does not mean that there is something like a pre-behavioural pain, essentially private to each individual, that this tribe lamentably misses out on. Rather, Wittgenstein would say: These people do not know how to play the referring game of privacy, i.e., how to equate an experience with a bodily limitation and effect an aspectual transition between the two, and how to deploy that as the core starting point of reference for both genuine expressions of pain as well the shamming behaviours to start off.[39]

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

Leaving behind the specific details of variant issues, textual exegesis and prolific illustrations, I fold up this chapter with a reminder of its major upshot. Reference is not only embedded in description, it is embedded in multiple ways. There are multiple modes of referring, multiple modes of the grammatical interplay between reference and description. Further, within each interplay the reference is not logically prior to the grammar, but is fleshed

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[39] A detailed narration of Wittgenstein's referring game of privacy is presented in the next chapter, section 2.3.

out bit by bit through each move of description. We have also sought to recast Wittgenstein's critique of the foundationalist theories of reference in terms of a critique of the absolute notion of space—as containing impenetrable terminals with pre-given routes and voids running between them. The chapter ended with Wittgenstein's suggestion of a new notion of space where reference, description and grammar are blended in the primacy of actions.

Wittgenstein Outgrowing the Conceptualism/ Non-conceptualism Debate on Reference

In this chapter, we take up a different strategy to play up the pitfalls in both non-descriptivist and descriptivist theories, or rather non-conceptual and conceptual theories of reference, and privilege Wittgenstein's view as outgrowing this standard dichotomy. Instead of addressing the classical and philosophical representations of the debate, we take up Raftopoulos's[1] contemporary theory that gives a detailed neurological-cum-psychological account of visual reference, strongly claiming it to be non-conceptual, pre-attentional and pre-conscious. We follow this up with an exposition of McDowell's theory of conceptualism,[2] attempting to appreciate the force of his critique of non-conceptualism not only against his chosen targets (Sellars, Davidson, Evans, etc.), but also against this particular version of Raftopoulos (even though there is no record of a direct exchange between these two thinkers). We seek to utilise these respective versions of conceptualism and non-conceptualism as fresh occasions to fine-tune Wittgenstein's insights to an optimum level—to rediscover the irreducible novelty and originality of the ways in which he dissolves the patent problems and pitfalls in standard philosophical polemics to navigate in an unpredictable direction.

[1] Raftopoulos, 'Reference, Perception and Attention'.

[2] McDowell, *Mind and World*.

This chapter is divided into three major sections. The first section addresses Raftopoulos's theory of non-conceptual visual reference, followed by a comparison and contrast against the standard philosophical versions of non-conceptualism. A detailed construction of Wittgenstein's critique of Raftopoulos's theory of reference will be presented in the final phase of this section. The second section offers a detailed exposition of McDowell's conceptualism with two principal motivations. The first is to bring Raftopoulos's view under a single rubric along with other versions of non-conceptualism that become vulnerable to McDowell's attack. Secondly and more importantly, I seek to strike a chord of harmony between McDowell and Wittgenstein in their respective styles of attack against non-conceptualism. I try to track down their common strategy of exposing the theory of non-conceptualism, the doctrine of private language and lastly the dualistic-cum-causal theory of action as different facets of the same misconception, and thus as vulnerable to the same critique. This section serves as a prelude to the final exercise of churning out the ultimate differences between these two thinkers. In the third and final section of this chapter, I strive to show that in spite of McDowell's reading of Wittgenstein as offering the same version of conceptualism as his own, and in spite of there being appreciable proximity between these two philosophers in their respective resistance to non-conceptualism, Wittgenstein's views take a radically anti-foundationalist direction, which was not availed of or appreciated by McDowell.

1. Wittgenstein's View of Reference vis-à-vis Raftopoulos's Neuro-psychological Theory of Reference of Visual Demonstratives

Let us browse through the main lines of tension between the psychological and logical versions of the non-conceptual model of reference, to indicate the route that Wittgenstein would carve out to escape from both of these. Psychological theories would *ex hypothesi* be confined to the specific psychological framework of the subject and to the world-specific nature of the atmosphere intervening between the object and her (the subject's) cognitive

mechanism. On the other hand, the logico-philosophical approach to the non-conceptualist theory of reference attempts to play up the contingency, the reversibility of the actual psycho-physical framework of reference, to extract a necessary, essential and irreversible identity that persists as the ultimate reference across all possible variations of the psychological and physiological features of the perceiving subject and the physical characters of the world. Wittgenstein, as we have seen, would problematise both the psychological-cum-physiological primitives of reference embraced by the non-conceptualist psychologists, as well as the logical atoms of the non-conceptualist philosophers. We shall reinstate this with fresh details against the new background of Raftopoulos's non-conceptual reference of visual demonstratives. Its obvious differences from the philosophical theories of non-conceptualism—of Russell, Donnellan, Kripke, Putnam, etc.—will surface in the course of the narrative, and Wittgenstein's insight into the issue of reference will hopefully break through all these internal dichotomies into a new idiom.

1.1 *Exposition of Raftopoulos's Theory*

In the paper cited earlier, Raftopoulos takes for granted the superiority of the non-conceptual theory of reference against its conceptualist counterpart. What he seeks to do is to expose the internal tensions with other non-conceptual versions within the arena of psychology, viz., with those of Mohan Matthen[3] and Campbell,[4] claiming to dissolve these internal inconsistencies and establish his own theory of reference on surer ground.

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[3] The principal work that Raftopoulos cites in this connexion is Mohan Matthen, *Seeing, Doing and Knowing: A Philosophical Theory of Sense-Perception* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005).

[4] Raftopoulos mentions the following works by J. Campbell: *Reference and Consciousness* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002); 'Does Visual Attention Depend on Sortal Classification? Reply to Clark', *Philosophical Studies*, vol. 127 (2006), pp. 221–37; and 'What Is the Role of Location in the Sense of a Visual Demonstrative? Reply to Matthen', *Philosophical Studies*, vol. 127 (2006), pp. 239–54.

Let us lay out the crux of Raftopoulos's claim. In this paper, he is concerned with the reference of visual demonstratives, viz., not with 'that mountain', 'this colour', 'this shape', 'this giraffe', but only with 'this', 'that', directed to visual objects. When the demonstratives are elliptically tagged with the above sortals, or even with the word 'object', they are not cases of *non-conceptual* reference, for the obvious reason that in such cases the demonstratives are conceptually contaminated. Further one has to set them apart from non-perceptual demonstratives like 'this' or 'that' that are supposed to refer to theory, argument, outlook, view, etc. Lastly, Raftopoulos confines his theory only to vision; he does not intend to stretch it to non-visual perceptual demonstratives.

Raftopoulos holds that reference to a visual object consists in segregating it from other objects in the background and presenting it as ready for further operations like the application of predicates, and for being identifiable as a numerical identical entity persisting through changes in space and time. No sortal of any level of generality, like 'substance', 'thing', 'shape', 'colour', or 'mountain', 'river', 'table', not even the word 'object', is to be tagged elliptically or non-elliptically with 'this' or 'that' if the latter are to claim the status of a genuine referrer.

For Raftopoulos, visual processing consists in three stages. The first stage is that of *sensation*, where differences in light intensities received in the retina are processed. The second stage is that of *perception* or *early vision*, where complex information is retrieved directly from the visual scene without any cognitive penetration and application of sortals. It is at this stage that the reference of visual demonstratives is achieved. It is the perceptual content of the mental act 'that one finds himself in' when locking on to the object, that plays the role of the non-conceptual 'that' in the utterance of perceptual demonstratives. Raftopoulos reiterates that by non-conceptual content he means that content of the visual processing which is cognitively impenetrable, and which the neural sciences can isolate partially. Cognition necessarily involves propositional attitudes and

concepts; the latter by virtue of their being constant, context-independent and freely repeatable elements, are essential ingredients of propositions. Hence it follows that cognition necessarily involves concepts. The content of a mental state is non-conceptual when its reference is determined independently of any description or sortals. Raftopoulos defines a content P as non-conceptual if and only if P is in direct causal connection, in a certain way independent of the cognitive states of the perceiver, to instantiated P-hood. To say that P is in direct causal connection with P-hood is also to say that cognitive states have only indirect causal relations with P.[5] Raftopoulos clarifies that here the cognitive states only determine the 'what' and 'where' of P-hood, not *how* or *why* it is that the subject is in a state with *this* content and not any other. Reference being essentially non-conceptual, it only takes into account the perceiver's environment and perceptual conditions; cognition necessarily involves the conceptual abilities possessed by the perceiver. Lastly comes the stage of vision, i.e., perception imbued with top-down conceptual information.

Let us now indicate the kernel of Matthen's version of conceptual reference and how Raftopoulos finds fault with it. Matthen holds that reference is achieved only by the dorsal system, whereas description or conceptual engagements are achieved only by the ventral system. Raftopoulos discards this mutual exclusion between the two streams, as this would jeopardise the very ground of the non-conceptual theory of reference which it aims to establish. Secondly, as opposed to Campbell's claim that reference is achieved through conscious attention to objects, but independently of the application of the sortals, Raftopoulos argues that the first is not possible without the second. He seeks to demonstrate that since reference does not involve any sortal, it has to be in a way both pre-attentional and pre-conscious. For him, reference involves spatial attention but

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[5] A. Raftopoulos, 'The Cognitive Impenetrability of Perception and Theory Ladenness', *Journal for General Philosophy of Science*, vol. 46, no. 1 (2015), pp. 87–103.

not object-attention; it is not totally unconscious, but involves phenomenal consciousness, though not access consciousness.

The course through which I will navigate the present discussion is roughly this. Both Matthen and Campbell invoke false dichotomies and false priorities in their theories, creating a cleavage between two streams in the visual system, and also between attentional and pre-attentional stages respectively. Both try to prioritise one stage or system over the other along with exclusive physiological spaces mapping each system into neat binary folds. I shall argue that though Raftopoulos seeks to offer more holistic solutions by dissolving their exclusive binaries and priorities, he does so at the cost of dubious *tertium quid*s or intermediary bridges. It is by first strengthening Raftopoulos's theory through a rehearsal of his acclaimed remedial of the weak points of the other non-conceptual versions that we finally seek to make it ready for the ultimate displacement in the light of the Wittgensteinian insight on reference.

An interesting tension between Campbell on the one hand, and Raftopoulos and Matthen on the other, gives us a valuable philosophical entry point into this psychological-cum-physiological perspective on reference. Campbell holds that the primary referent of visual demonstratives is location, for it is location that identifies the bearer of the perceived features by binding the features into a single object. Perception of location comes first, followed by that of the object, for it is only through locations that representation of objects becomes possible. For Matthen and Raftopoulos on the other hand, a visual state on this view virtually lapses into co-locatibility of certain visual features of objects; it fails to present these features as belonging to an object persisting in space and time. For Matthen and Raftopoulos, visual states are already in an object-attribute form. Matthen states that the direction or the spatial framework is the *form* of representing visual features, while the distances, sizes and shapes are the content of this spatial framework. The *form* or *grid* of co-locatable visual features comes first as an

object-file; the locatable features are made to fill in that grid through a secondary process.

This tension about the relative priority of location versus located object throws up a philosophical counterpart—the conflict between descriptivist and non-descriptivist theories of reference. Interestingly, Campbell's theory seems to be a descriptivist project masquerading as non-descriptivism, in so far as it puts up a set of specially accentuated descriptions—space-time locations—as routes to reach out to the referent. In other words, as Russell warns us, if 'this' is to serve as the genuine referrer or a logically proper name, it should not be misconceived as thisness, it should not lapse into finely chiselled descriptions disguised as proper names.[6] Reference should not lapse into accentuated descriptivism where what masquerades as the referrer is nothing but an accentuated description, a spatio-temporal feature—e.g., 'the one and only one position or point which is the locus of features xyz', or 'the object residing in xyz location'. It is as if the location is projected as a unique description or property inviting an object to come and grace the location. And once this seeming referrer is unpacked in the threefold proposition in the Russellian mould, the singularly conjured body of the referrer disperses into full sentences. And so far as the referrer is actually a unique description ascribed to an object, this statement may well be negated.

However, Campbell's theory cannot be definitively branded as a special version of descriptivism, for, on a different reading, locations claimed to be referred in Campbell's scheme may be said to be logical atoms, which do not come as definite descriptions or properties of being a locus, but as independent referents. On this reading, to be a location, it has to be loaded with various properties, but location does not *itself* turn into the property of being the locus of properties. It is location that reference locks on to, not as the representable feature in the location, but as *causing* the reference. Indeed, Campbell holds that the location

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[6] Russell, *Philosophy of Logical Atomism*.

is the presupposition of conscious attention; it is attention that makes implicit location explicit.

Claiming location to be the primary referent whereby the locatable features are bound into an object is a rather unstable position, for on this theory the location readily lapses into spatio-temporal descriptions which are not *referred*, but *stated* to have a unique instantiation. It suggests that one is aware not of objects, but primarily of some properties hanging in some location. So for Matthen, visual states do not present co-locatibility of certain visual features as objects, but present these features as already belonging to an object persisting in space and time. Campbell's account of location minus the locatable object might end up in a form of descriptivism, which he himself did not foresee.

According to Matthen, there are two kinds of vision: (*a*) motion-guiding vision; and (*b*) vision for knowing the environment. The first kind is processed in the dorsal system from the perceiver-centred framework, giving information about distance and angles with respect to the perceiver's body, eye and head. Vision processed in this framework is customarily called the 'where-system'. What Matthen seems to suggest is that the actual distance, direction, angles, location, etc., with respect to the subject, constitute a grid or the object-file, and this causes him to act independently of the knowledge of the features that fill out this grid. In the second kind of vision, all the features of an object, viz., size, shape, colour, texture, as well as its location with respect to other objects in the surroundings, are processed in the ventral stream. This is an epistemic vision operating in a scene-based framework, where all the descriptive features including the spatial ones are known *qua* the content of the spatial framework, not *qua* the skeletal frame itself. So what Matthen seems to suggest is that it is through this motion-guiding perceiver-centred vision that the *actual* location of the object and its distances and directions *with respect to the subject's body* achieves reference. Reference is not secured by

the *representation* of the location with respect to other objects in the environment.

We need to get into some further details of Matthen's account to appreciate the significance of Raftopoulos's reactions to it. Matthen holds that bodily action is carried out through three stages. In the first stage, one needs to know the kind to which the object belongs, its size, shape, colour, etc. The second stage formulates the plan of action with respect to the object. It is in the third stage that the motor-guiding vision comes into play. It is this last stage that enables us to come into physical contact with the object, that actually amounts to a deictic ostension to the object. This deictic vision gives us a special feeling of being in contact with the world, which descriptive vision cannot afford. Thus, Matthen has to uphold that, though deictic vision succeeds descriptive information achieved through the ventral stream, the former is logically independent of the latter. But it is doubtful whether Matthen can maintain this position without holding that reference in the sense of vision-guided action has to wait for epistemic scene-based information, unless he finds some other provision to escape this conclusion.

Let us see to what extent Raftopoulos concurs with Matthen so that we can figure out where he chooses to disagree with him. Raftopoulos agrees that reference is not to location that subsequently binds features into objects, but rather to the object-file in which features are filled through a secondary process. But he censures Matthen's proposed dichotomy between two streams of vision as achieving reference and description in mutual exclusion of each other, for such a programme, according to him, would make reference fall back on conceptual representation. For Raftopoulos (as opposed to Matthen), a mere spatial grid or an object-file is not enough. Raftopoulos seems to be resisting any neurological theory that would uphold an empty object-cast procured by the dorsal system and empty floating features in the ventral system standing in need of being combined somehow. Here we find it philosophically tempting to hear the Kripkean voice of anxiety in Raftopoulos's reaction:

the connecting bridge, if delinked from the destination-referent, cannot take you to the latter. Just as the bridge presupposes the destination-referent, similarly the dorsal and the ventral systems are not mutually exclusive; the former processes information received from the latter.

As per Matthen's claim, if reference boils down to the action of locking onto the object, and is to be achieved exclusively by the dorsal system, it falls into palpable problems. A subject who voluntarily or involuntarily remains passive nevertheless refers. When, after the stimulus onset, an action is not initiated within a few milliseconds, then the visuo-motor information it receives from the scenario is lost. The dorsal system only works in real time, and hence a delayed action will fall back on the ventral stream for the transmission of the stored information to the dorsal stream. To keep Matthen's theory operative, the semantic information regarding the object or the visual scene must be transmitted to the dorsal stream, for it is the latter that is connected with the motor cortex.

As the two systems employ two different spatial frameworks, their interconnection poses some technical problems, and even if they are circumvented, there are other obvious loopholes in Matthen's theory. In cases where the subject is instructed to remain passive, the dorsal system remains inoperative; as a result the subject working only with the ventral stream should be seeing the scenario, non-referentially, like the contents of a picture. This is absurd and also conflicts with other statements of Matthen. So it follows that reference must be achieved also by the ventral stream.

Raftopoulos suggests that the ventral system can fix reference in the non-descriptive way, provided the spatio-temporal and other features used in identifying the object are bypassed, i.e., are not stored and assigned to the object as its constitutive meaning. In other words, through this bypassing, the referent is locked on a self-identical object persisting through changes in space, time and qualities. These spatio-temporal features constitute the

foundational facts that fix the reference and do not contribute to the semantic content of the object-term.

So overall, what Raftopoulos suggests is that the dorsal stream is not a self-contained and isolated space that can achieve reference by itself. Rather, reference is constituted by a particular mode of operation. The dorsal system does depend upon the ventral stream to achieve reference, but it guides interaction with the environment directly by bypassing the cognitive centres in the brain that store long-term information. On the other hand, when the dorsal system is inoperative, the ventral system also achieves reference in a non-descriptive manner, by circumventing the specific spatio-temporal and other features that may change, and yet retaining the referential identity of the object.

In the light of the foregoing discussion, we can now undertake a more detailed survey of what emerges as Raftopoulos's view—purged of the defects of Matthen and sharing a common crux with Campbell.[7]

Objects with their neat boundaries impinge on our visual systems prior to any conceptual intervention. These individuals directly retrieved from the scene as referents of visual demonstratives are 'visual objects' or 'proto-objects'. They are structural descriptions (s-ds) of 2D objects. 2.5D objects may be said to be the primal sketch that our vision draws before they are turned into 3D objects with conceptual features. First, these primal 2.5D sketches transform light intensities on the retina into edges and regions, and group them into visible surfaces. This stage is even said to encode minimal information about colour, texture, and also distance from the observer. Due to the suggestions of additional depth information, the representation is characterised as 2.5D. At this stage, the internal parts of an object—say the human body—are all disjoined, the palm is not connected to the wrist, the wrist is not integrated into the arms, and the arms hang loose from the shoulders. The

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[7] The following account of Raftopoulos contains some additional detail which I have derived from E. B. Goldstein (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Perception*, vol. 2 (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2010, pp. 643–48).

3D representation constructs the entire object from the 2.5D representation. The latter is viewer centred, i.e., it is still restricted to the flat and double representations of the two retinas, and all the rotational aspects of the object to be synthesised in the third dimension are only suggested, but not fully present. Its distance and position in the common space-time coordinate with respect to other objects is yet to be accessed. It is only after all the flat surfaces are availed of and synthesised into one object, and all its sides in relation to its surroundings are processed, that we procure the full 3D object-centric representation.

The notion of 2.5D objects characterised as s-ds requires some explanation. Evidently they obtain this characterisation in so far as they describe or delineate the flat parts of objects in their spatial configuration. These descriptions are also said to be bereft of any detail about the object's colour and texture—of all those surface features that change with the changes in viewing conditions (lighting, intermediary obstructions, angles, distances, etc.). The basic idea is that the *same* s-d has to be recovered or otherwise derived from different retinal images of the same object, and also to figure as the ground of perceptual recognition of the same object seen before in a different space under different viewing conditions. This robust or invariable character of the s-ds holds the main attraction of the theory. For these s-ds are supposed to figure not only as the causal ground of re-identification of the same object across different space, time and other viewing conditions, but also to ensure strictly individual identification of the object over different contexts, independent of any class property that the individual may share with other individuals in the same or different space and time.

It should be mentioned that neurologists and psychologists are not unanimous on the exact nature of the s-d of 2.5D objects, nor on the precise mechanism through which they are transformed into 3D objects. Since Raftopoulos does not supply enough inputs on this area, I take the liberty of browsing through some of the standard versions of this s-d theory, with a trailing conjecture that he must have either upheld one of these

versions or opted for a third and perhaps a better one. The first version of the s-d theory claims that 2D cross-sections—say circles or squares—are swept along different axes to produce a cylinder or brick-shaped image, and progressively produce more complex 3D shapes. So on this theory, 2D surfaces transform into full-fledged 3D objects by sweeping into 3D generalised cones. But the question as to how the gap between 2D surfaces and 3D cones is to be bridged, or how 3D cones get shaped from 2D surfaces, surely cannot be avoided. It is suggested that the outlines of the 2D surfaces could be used to find axes of their main parts; then they could be used to derive generalised cones and their spatial configurations. Finally these s-ds would be matched with those stored in visual memory. In this way, the invariance problem, i.e., the identification and re-identification of the same object across changing spaces and times and viewing conditions, is sought to be solved by postulating these invariant 3D models. This theory of 3D primitives or generalised cones is further developed to 'geometrical ions or geons', which are claimed to come in a set of 36, in different spatial relations, to compose different objects. These geons are combined into s-ds and used further to create familiar objects like a mug, pail, etc.[8]

While for Campbell reference involves not only spatial attention but also object-attention, Raftopoulos asserts that early vision or visual reference involves only the stage of spatial attention and not object-attention. Raftopoulos's theory of visual reference may now be laid out in greater detail, focusing on his theory of attention. As mentioned earlier, reference for him is pre-semantic; it does not involve any meaning processing or conceptual engagement. He argues that all the evidences of neurological experiments show that for the first 250 milliseconds of stimulus onset, the stage of object-attention does not begin. The span of the first 250 milliseconds may be ramified into further stages:

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[8] Ibid.

(a) The first 70–80 milliseconds is a feedforward sweep (FFS) towards the V1, and from there to the temporal and parietal regions of the brain, activating most of the visual areas.

(b) Only after 70–90 milliseconds does spatial attention take place. It is a voluntary task-driven search at the salient locations, and it works by modulating PI wave forms and thereby enhances visual processing. But this stage of visual processing is only sensitive to the characteristics of the stimuli. To explain this point more specifically, if one is assigned a task of identifying a particular object with a particular feature x, spatial attention may enhance the spontaneous firing of the neurons which are specifically tuned to the attended location, both before and after the presentation of the stimulus. But this, Raftopoulos warns, does not determine *what* subjects perceive at the location. He specially emphasises that enhancing the response tuned to a particular location independent of the neuron's preference keeps the differential responses of the neurons unaltered. This, he claims, ensures that *what* is perceived at the location remains unaltered.

(c) After 150 milliseconds, the brain has responded to the physical characteristics of the entire visual array and has started fusing the features to form single forms or s-ds. This process of fusing is called local recurrent processing or LRP, which comprises a lateral and top-down flow of information in addition to FFS. *But the crucial, moot point in Raftopoulos's theory is that the information that flows top-down originates from circuits of early vision, where the objects are already segregated in s-ds of 2.5D objects, and does not involve any conceptual information.* At this stage, the N1 indexes the beginning and registration of targets and distracters in the visual scene, i.e., registers the differences between the objects that are relevant and those that are irrelevant to the task.

(d) It is only after 200–300 milliseconds that object-based attention takes off. The same areas that were involved in

the FFS and LRP are engaged, but attention is amplified in these regions, and voluntary task-driven search is enhanced by enhancing the neuronal activation of salient objects and locations.

(e) Finally, after 250 milliseconds, some of the old areas participate in semantic or conceptual processing of the input. This phase also incorporates processing that involves the higher centres of the brain. Finally, objects are classified and recognised in terms of their class properties.

In fine, referential identification of visual objects—their segregation and individuation in terms of their repeatable numerical identity, is a pre-attentive stage. It further emerges that object-attention does not start off in a homogeneous, unruffled field, from which it selects certain areas and ignores others. Rather, Raftopoulos (along with other psychologists and neuroscientists) emphasises the point that attention itself emerges as a result of biased competition. As all the neurons that encode a stimulus cannot enter the receptive field of the brain, there are two factors that determine the competition and final selection of the neuronal assemblies. The first is a spatial or topographical determination whereby the cortical pattern on which the neurons are laid out determines which of the assemblies will be availed of for higher processing and which will be left out. Secondly, processes which are behaviourally relevant, like pressing a button, or grasping an object, are selected for higher processing. On the whole, reference is a pre-attentional process where the s-ds of 2.5D objects are already procured and the neuronal assemblies are in a dynamic interaction; whereas attention emerges as a result of this mutual interaction and competition.

Raftopoulos sums up the situation in the following manner. According to the existing scientific evidence, reference consists in a bottom-up stage, where the processing is guided only by the characteristics of the stimuli, like colour, proximity, oriented line, etc. But in this stage, the preliminary segregation of stimuli into

s-ds of 2.5D objects (alternatively named 'proto-objects') has already taken place. Now, although this preliminary segregation can be overridden by top-down effects, like familiarity with objects or scenes, or some form of attentional setting, these top-down effects can only occur after the referential identification has been achieved in terms of parsing the scene into proto-objects. While this initial parsing can be incomplete or ambiguous, it is from here that the top-down factors take off. Even in the operations of determining the boundaries of the object, the top-down effects have to take off from the preliminary or indecisive boundaries already secured by the stage of early vision or reference.

1.2 *Raftopoulos versus Some Philosophical Theories of Non-conceptual Reference*

Let us reflect how this theory of reference in terms of securing proto-objects in pre-conceptual vision stands vis-à-vis both the classical non-conceptual theories of Russell and Kripke as well as some revised versions of conceptualism, say that of Strawson. Firstly, for all philosophers, reference is not restricted to present perception, or to actions. One can refer to objects of the remote past, and, as Raftopoulos points out against the too restrictive theory of Matthen, we unmistakably refer in situations which do not involve any movement of the limbs with respect to the referred object. We may go beyond this particular article where Raftopoulos is exclusively concerned with visual perceptual demonstratives, and ponder on his approach to the physiology of memory reference. Strawson gives a general account of the referring use of expressions by specifying the contextual conditions—viz., relation to the speaker, the space and time she occupies, the immediate focus of interest, her shared personal histories with the hearers. Thus, the present context in which the speaker is placed as well as the present spatio-temporal features of the object are bypassable in future reference; but what remains important is that the present location be spread

out along a single space-time axis, so that those features can be recovered in memory along the shared line of epistemological history. Kripke would also admit reference in memory, provided the object itself, through a real causal chain across space and time and different persons, causes the reference of the user. However, Strawson's theory of reference is descriptive: it does not allow reference to obtain in spite of the mismatch of descriptive features, which Russell's,[9] Kripke's,[10] and Donnellan's[11] theories would allow. But for Strawson the presence of the object, along with the fulfilment of the epistemological conditions, would not suffice for reference; this would require that the word be put to the *referring* use, that the contextual conditions be *used* to activate the descriptive features of the object and be linked to the latter. Even for Kripke and Donnellan, the intention of the speaker to use the word in the same way as customarily used by the community is necessary for reference. On the other hand, it is questionable whether reference on Raftopoulos's narration, even when achieved in a task-driven act, in so far as it belongs to the phenomenally conscious level of pre-conceptual spatial attention, is a voluntary action with intentional engagements in the full-fledged sense of the term.

The major discord between Raftopoulos's theory of reference as proto-objects, and philosophical versions of reference in the hands of Russell and Kripke, may be explained as follows. In the first place, Raftopoulos and other s-d theorists spell out their accounts in terms of psychological atoms. Their programme is to find the most primitive psychological data of vision, and their method is that of conducting several experiments on the subjects. Now, in the first place, by the very nature of the experimental sciences, these experiments are fallible, and the proposed primitives may be overturned by other primitives in

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[9] Russell's theory of reference allows a mismatch in the rather twisted sense that for him reference lies beyond the possibility of either a match or a mismatch with descriptions.

[10] Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*.

[11] Donnellan, 'Reference and Definite Descriptions'.

other experiments. On the other hand, Russell's claim that there *have* to be ultimate simples to make linguistic communication possible is purely logical. Although the claim of psychological or neurological theories that there have to be robust, repeatable foundations of object identification through changes in space and time (*albeit causally, not recognitionally*) is a logical one, yet it is sought to be established within a psychological framework. These theories work by formulating certain hypothetical connections between their postulates and the deliverances of the subjects and the machines; the findings are supposed to confirm and not entail their postulates. Doubts accrue not only as to the procedure of experiments, but also as to the hypothetical connection of their postulate with their leading to such and such results.

Further, for Russell there are no pre-conceptual and invariant proto-objects which are the real and robust referents underlying the conceptual recognition of the same individual across changes of space and time and various viewing conditions. For Russell, referents are momentary sense-data, therefore there is no question of their reappearing (even pre-consciously) in our re-identification of the same individual object through the changes in space and time. The re-identification of the same full-fledged object across space and time may very well occur without the causal recurrence of those proto-objects of Raftopoulos. As we know, the re-identification of a table as 'the same table I saw before' is actually making a conjunctive statement: 'There is a unique object with xyz characteristics in pqr time and space, and the object xyz is the same as the unique object seen at abc time and space.' Raftopoulos's insistence that the article 'the' in the phrase 'the table that I saw before' refers pre-conceptually to a proto-object boils down to the insistence that the speaker of such phrases makes a conjunctive statement to the effect that there is a unique proto-object underlying his use of the phrase, a statement with a questionable truth-value. Even if such statements are true, that would not entail that such proto-objects are non-conceptually referred by the article 'the' in an early stage

of vision. Rival experiments and theories meaningfully assert statements such as, 'The proto-objects supposedly underlying visual recognition of objects do not exist,' or 'The proto-objects are not 3D cones but are of the nature of geons or images.' As is well known, Russell would reduce even the second statement into a conjunction of three statements, where the definite description in the subject-place has a primary occurrence, whereas in the first statement manifestly in the form of a negative existential, the definite description has a secondary occurrence. We know that for Russell, the fact that definite descriptive phrases can be dispersed in meaningful existential statements amply shows that the article 'the' cannot be split apart from the entire phrase and the entire statement in which it occurs, and be put up as a non-conceptual referrer.[12]

Kripke's claim of transworld identities causing our reference is also a logical claim, or rather, a claim to coalesce fact with logic. It attempts not to leave the nature of the referrer and the referent as pre-descriptional and elusive as Russell and early Wittgenstein did, but tries to find out what this referential identity would be across all possible worlds. And as we know, this referential identity with respect to proper names (of living and non-living individuals) is the matter from which these individuals originate, and with respect to natural kind terms, it is their respective atomic structure.[13] But it is both interestingly and

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[12] These comments on Russell are based on the standard sources, like his 'On Denoting', 'Descriptions', and *Philosophy of Logical Atomism*, Lecture VI. Incidentally, I must note that the way I have worked out the discrepancy between Raftopoulos and Russell does not cover his (Russell's) intriguing notion of memory-acquaintance. See, for instance, Bertrand Russell, *Problems of Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), chapter 5. Indeed, Raftopoulos's theory of proto-objects recurring causally as the non-conceptual ground of recognition may seem to be an attractive hypothesis for explaining non-conceptual or unconscious memory, or 'memory-acquaintance' as Russell would prefer to call it. And yet it is not clear how Russell would accommodate momentary sense-data as recurring across changing space and time.

[13] Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*.

uninterestingly obvious that neither the originary matter, nor the atomic structure of natural kind objects, can be coalesced with s-ds of 2.5D objects, whether in the shape of 3D cones or geons. For Kripke too was concerned not with finding psychological primitives as referents, but with logical primitives. Indeed if s-ds are the actual psychological primitives, they would be the same for the two different referents—that of 'water' or 'H_2O', and also of 'water$_2$', whose molecular structure can be named 'XYZ'. For Kripke, the problem of referential identification is not so much the psychological representation of the same individual object across time and space, but about what ontologically underlies such identification, a problem he addresses in and through the formulation of counterfactuals. Counterfactuals may of course operate with changing space and time, texture, colour and lighting conditions, but the irreversible robustness that underlies such identification is not the psychological data (s-d in whatever form or images). And the obvious reason as to why Kripke does not coalesce his transworld referential identity with the psychological data is that the latter pertain to the world-specific characteristics of the cognitive situation— the sense organs of the perceiver, the nature of the atmosphere, the peculiar conditions intervening between the perceiver and the object. Kripke on the other hand engaged with the thought experiment of doing away with all such world-specific contingencies to extract the minimal transworld essence. When the psychologist frames the possible changes in the nature of the sense organs and the viewing conditions, all such conjectures are framed within his contingent psychological framework.[14] And

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[14] It is vitally important to mention that Kripke did preoccupy himself with the irreversible reference of psychological terms such as 'pain' (*Naming and Necessity*, Lecture III), and here he concedes that the very nature of the enquiry relegates the reference to psychological or phenomenological data, as to how the pain is *felt*. Similar remarks apply to cases of determining the reference of 'heat sensation', 'yellow sensation', etc. Given that Raftopoulos is concerned only with visual reference, I am concerned here only with the Kripkean treatment of

as we know, Kripke was quite ready to abandon his acclaimed referential identity—the progenitor for the individual proper names and atomic structure for the natural kind terms—on the ground that the reproductive theory or doctrine of atomic structures may be wrong, and our perceptions of the origin of individuals or the microscopic visions of atomic structures may well be mass illusions. But he wraps up his theory with the very important reminder that what really constitutes the origin of an individual or the atomic structure of natural objects in a particular situation cannot ever be outgrown in any possible situation; it will percolate as the irreversible referential identity across all possible thought experiments, across all possible worlds.[15] This is roughly the reason why the philosophical non-conceptualists would not be interested in the psychological counterparts of non-conceptualism; non-conceptual data will always have a world-specific contingency built into them. And the psychological tools of bypassing contingencies (like changes in the viewing conditions) will be essentially grafted onto the contingent framework of psychology itself.

The further difference between Raftopoulos and his philosophical counterparts surfaces when we look into the exact way in which Raftopoulos speaks of these two systems

reference with respect to the last example. We may hopefully assume that this phrase is a rigid designator for Kripke, having the status of an indexical or a visual demonstrative, with which Raftopoulos is concerned. I also venture to suggest that Kripke would be able to set aside proto-objects as contingent, world-specific variations to find a more substantial psychological datum of yellow sensation that may be shared by perceivers with different neurological constitutions. Indeed, there are considerable controversies regarding the exact nature of these proto-objects, whether they are in the shape of 3D cones or geons, or images, etc. Hence, perhaps from the Kripkean standpoint, 'proto-objects' would not be a rigid designator about which one can say that what it designates in any one world, it will designate in all possible worlds.

[15] Ibid., Lecture III, pp. 117–28, where Kripke mentions the possibility of mass illusions and of the atomic theory being false.

of vision—the bypassing vision of reference and the epistemic-cum-descriptive vision of the features of the object. While Matthen sought to restrict the two visions—the descriptive and the non-descriptive—to two spatially separate streams of the nervous system (the ventral and the dorsal) and thereby got into trouble, Raftopoulos exposes the problems of creating such cleavages, and suggests that they interpenetrate to form a common space where they can take over each other's function. But what Raftopoulos does is to invoke a third space overlapping between the two streams, and posits that to be the physiological foundation of reference. This is out of tune with the main spirit of the philosophical theories of reference, and may turn out to be the common point of opposition shared by as diverse theories as those of Strawson, Wittgenstein and Kripke. For Strawson and Wittgenstein, reference is a mode of employment, viz., that of bypassing certain descriptive features and highlighting contextual conditions to activate a starting point. All these are voluntary actions, not necessarily involving a limb operation with the object, and not falling back on a neatly mappable physiological foundation.

1.3 *A Wittgensteinian Critique of the Neuro-psychological Foundation of Reference*

I have sought to work out Wittgenstein's way of displacing the logical foundationalism of Russell and Kripke. Now I shall attempt to construct the routes through which he would seek to displace the neuro-physiological foundation of reference as offered by Raftopoulos. I shall first try to construct the principled framework of resistance from Wittgenstein's standpoint, and follow it up with some nitty-gritty arguments to address Raftopoulos's intensely detailed account.

Let us go back to the very suggestive spatial metaphor that Wittgenstein uses in *Z* 350, the metaphor of 'concepts as scaffolding facts, or cutting paths'. I had argued in the previous chapter that Wittgenstein deliberately uses this metaphor to

expose its absurdity, the absurdity of there being objects ossified into lumps—as if they are terminal points in space—whereas concepts faithfully track down the real paths and avoid the real gaps in between. Now I shall try to argue that Raftopoulos's theory of non-conceptual reference by visual demonstratives, supposedly achieved by the neuro-physiological happenings in the brain and nervous system, is cast in a model fraught with the same set of myths and flaws.

First, the theory operates with presupposed chunks of objects given out there—i.e., the object of perception, the light waves, the sense organs, the nerves and brain—and the causal operations connecting these supposedly discrete objects over an empty space in between. The target-object is fashioned as a neatly bounded lump, replete with definite properties, after which the neurologist starts dissecting it into 2D surfaces, proceeds to contrive the materials to fill in the gaps amongst these surfaces to transform them into 3D cones, and finally into the full-fledged external objects with which the original narration started. The entire model is a regressive strategy of collating the explanandum and the explanans, starting from the full-fledged target-object on the one hand and its presupposed 2.5D counterparts on the other, and then stitching them up with numerously contrived intermediaries. The FFS of 100 milliseconds where signals from the original object are stated to be transmitted bottom up, the recurrent processing restricted within visual areas (LRP), before any signals from the higher executive centres start off, are all contrived identities conjured with the help of technical proper names—devices to carve out the circular closure. The 'where' and 'what' as bare referent are an artificial abstraction, not a given psychological datum. The neurologists' programme of starting from discrete stimuli that congregate into 2D surfaces and gradually shape up to s-d of 2.5D objects—with the bottom-up principles of commitment to the supposedly given, unpolluted characteristics of the stimuli, the 2.5D proto-objects finally navigating to the 3D objects which the top-down principles dress up with full-fledged and repeatable class properties—is

an ingeniously designed contrivance. The grand narrative starts off with neatly bounded objects garbed with complete features, regressively dissected into simpler parts or layers through a fine-grained structure of milliseconds, altogether projecting the deceptive stance of a genuinely progressive synthesis, under the real external constraints of an object out there, and of the intersubjectively shared conceptual tools grafted onto our brain.

The underlying strategy of this regressive storyline may be exposed in a different format, with a different orientation, where the narrative can be seen to be actually creating a temporal representation of space, by configuring space into a strictly one-dimensional line. The putative lumps of objects situated out there *in* space—viz., the target-objects, light rays, stimuli and sense organs, as well as the causal operations amongst them— are all duplicated in time; and to ensure that the objects in this duplicated space move *only* forward, they themselves have to have a uni-dimensional magnitude, with no real thickness or depth that can enable them to roll sideways, upwards or downwards. One can alternatively picture the situation as a temporal axis of space, already laid down in advance, an axis which can travel only forward; and the objects in this space thinning out in one-dimensional layers and jumping upward from one point to the next.

Here we need a strong reminder of the Wittgensteinian insight into the all-inclusiveness of space, to lay bare the underlying strategy of Raftopoulos's narrative. As all points of space are infused with every other, once you start with an object-lump to show how it is constructed progressively from its simple elements to the complex completion, you have already been saddled with a prefabricated game of dispersal and reversal. While from Wittgenstein's viewpoint all logico-philosophical foundations of reference can be shown to be circular, here the circularity of this psychological account has a special character—viz., this circular enclosure is devised in the one-dimensional axis of time. The current psychological-cum-neurological accounts lay out this temporal axis in terms of milliseconds—that is to say, every

layer of space encompassed in a second, say in every tick of the second-hand of the clock, every flicker of the second-marker of the digital watch, or the space of 186,000 miles traversed by a ray of light—each of these second-spaces is further subdivided into 1,000 parts. Each of these millisecond-spaces, i.e., nth part of a second-space, is nothing but one-dimensional spaces with mathematically dissected dimensions travelling ahead in the one-dimensional axis of time. This spatial projection of the temporal narration of objects being represented in the brain and nervous system is fundamentally the same, whether the temporal axis is laid out in terms of seconds or in milliseconds. As per contemporary neurological evidences, at some point of this temporal axis, i.e., at the 100th second-space, this duplication of space turns into a representational duplication—taking the shape of 2D surfaces to 2.5D, and finally to full-fledged representations with conceptual features. But it is important to note once more that this neuro-philosophical account willy-nilly commits itself to the dualistic presupposition, viz., to the commitment that this *representation* of three-dimensional magnitude is not itself three-dimensional, it is a depthless layer that, being bereft of spatial movement, only moves forward on the one-dimensional axis of time. In other words, this neurological account unwittingly falls into a Cartesian model, where, pierced with the Rylean resistance, its non-spatial space or the purely temporal identity of disembodied mind virtually turns out to be a truncated construction of space itself. To put my argument more pointedly, the neurological progression from given stimuli to 2.5D and from there to 3D objects is a closed aspectual transition between full-fledged objects in outer space and their full-fledged conceptual representation—the intermediary phases all stitched up with fine-grained neurological tools. The microscopic mechanism of this dissection and the superlative dexterity of its compensatory redress effectively conceals the regressively contrived character of the entire operation. The s-ds of 2.5D objects, or what are technically called the 'proto-objects', are suitably placed in this luxurious construction, with an overwhelming appearance of a

non-circular authenticity. Let us work through the internal details of Raftopoulos's account to show how, at various junctures, it betrays a regressive mechanism, or to put it otherwise, how at each stage the dissected part already presupposes the whole.

Indeed, Raftopoulos has ingenious strategies to reconcile the non-conceptual character of reference with conceptual principles irresistibly breaking into every phase of early vision. When the stages of FFS and spatial attention are said to be governed by the given character of the stimuli, the neurologists themselves are often unsure about what these features might be. Usually sameness of colour, orientation of line, motion, and proximity are posed as candidates for this position. Obviously the stimuli cannot judge themselves to be spatially close or same in colour, falling in the same line of motion, etc., and thereby congregate into a single unit. Similar problems recur in the field of attention. Raftopoulos emphatically asserts that attention does not start off from an unruffled and homogeneous field wherefrom it can select some areas and reject others. Rather, the stimuli are laid out in a cortical pattern which is not at all uniform. There are spatial variations, topographical undulations, relative priority of those neuronal congregations in the more receptive centres in the brain than those areas which are in the periphery.

Raftopoulos also holds that with the bottom-up processing of stimuli into formation of units, there is a parallel top-down operation going on. There are considerable ambiguities and indeterminacies within the 2D surfaces that are pushed up as *given* data—indeterminacies about which surfaces are to be swept out into 3D representations, etc.—and these ambiguities need to be resolved by top-down interventions. As we have seen, these top-down principles include familiarity, set or attitude, similarity, etc. Indeed, the contemporary neurological accounts of visual perception seem to retain many of the tenets of Gestalt psychology, particularly with respect to the question of whether feature binding is due to these features belonging to the given stimuli or to the perceiving organism. Further, fresh problems accrue to the interface between the top-down and bottom-up

principles of processing. It is doubtful whether the 2.5D objects that are pre-conceptual and cognitively impenetrable can nevertheless evoke memories of familiar objects seen before, on the basis of mutual similarity of features. Factors like attitude, good figure, pregnanz, are claimed to operate on ambiguous or indeterminate surfaces to make them definite and complete.

Does this not betray the presence of top-down conceptual principles already embedded in the so-called bottom-up operations for achieving reference, claimed to be driven only by the strictly given character of the stimuli? As already indicated, Raftopoulos seeks to tackle this problem by devising two kinds— or rather, two stages—of perception: one in which the perceptual content is conceptualised in terms of communicable and recursive class characteristics, and another where the concepts figure *not* as repeatable class properties, but as moulds in which the perceptual content is shaped. The first is a case where the perceptual content is cognitively penetrated, whereas the second is not, and the conceptual representation of the first kind is preceded by the second. To recall Raftopoulos's clarification of the difference: in the first case, the perceptual content has a direct causal relation with cognition, while in the second case the causal relation is indirect. To put it in yet another way: in the first case, perceptual content P is epistemologically mediated; in the second case, P is causally connected with instantiated P-hood. According to Raftopoulos, these non-conceptual operations of concepts (if we may use the term) are learned through our experience, and then stored in our visual memory to determine the processing of our subsequent experience (The way Raftopoulos presents the matter does indeed raise questions regarding the exact phase of our childhood or infanthood up until which we need to glean these concepts from experience, after which we can let them settle as sedimented moulds in our brain).

Further, this account of non-conceptual concepts also sets Raftopoulos apart from Kant's theory of a priori concepts or categories. These conceptual principles, it is claimed, do

not affect experience in the top-down manner, but are built into it. Thus, both the stimulus features like motion, shape, proximity and orientation on the one hand, and factors like familiarity, attitude and good figure on the other, operate non-conceptually or non-semantically. In other words, they operate *qua* underlying moulds of perception, themselves not surfacing to the level of consciously articulated representation—not as class features that are identifiable across time and contexts. Thus it is not the tableness of the table, but the target-context spatial relationships that are stored as unconscious perceptual memories and are activated to modify FFS. Raftopoulos also claims that early visual areas store fragments of objects, shapes and their configurations (edges, surfaces, or perhaps something like three-dimensional cones or geons as per other versions of 2.5D objects) as unconscious memories.

Now this strategy of using concepts in the non-conceptual and non-cognitive mould labours under various unwarranted assumptions that we are working against. Without the myth of pre-given objects smugly resting in a dead space-container, the mechanism of their leaving outlines, or files, or skeletal slots in unconscious memory cannot be constructed. Further, Raftopoulos's theory makes itself vulnerable to the notorious scheme–content dichotomy, problematised by Davidson, where at every juncture the strenuous attempt to segregate the given content from the scheme is liable to get frustrated. The theory of non-conceptual content as directly caused by reality and indirectly caused by cognition is deeply submerged in layers of polemics that shall be addressed in due course. No explanation is provided as to how the proto-objects can enter into an indirect causal relationship with principles of conscious conceptual operations. The model of a causal chain reaction obtaining between physical objects cannot perhaps be carried over to the principles of conceptual operation—the latter cannot act over pre-conceptual and pre-cognitive proto-objects to transmute them into full-fledged representations.

Raftopoulos says that it is the perceptual content of the mental act that one finds himself in when locking on to the object, that plays the role of a non-conceptual 'that' in the utterance of perceptual demonstrative.[16] Such observations display a palpable tension between two contrary claims: the introspectability of the subjective state, and the cognitive impenetrability of its content. To claim that one's utterance of the demonstrative 'this' or 'that' is causally triggered off by a non-conceptual content needs a difficult reconciliation between the knowledge of the state one is in, and bracketing the represented content of that state. Here again we see the strained effort to delink the non-conceptual from the conceptual—the reference from the description.

Moreover, Raftopoulos says that the perceptual content is the 'mode of presentation' of the demonstrative in the mind of the subject.[17] Of course, Frege has no exclusive entitlement to this phrase to equate it with his intersubjective 'sense' in the third realm, starkly opposed to reference, and Raftopoulos has every right to twist the phrase in the sense *he* intends. But if the phrase is supposed to mean the special way in which an object phenomenologically hits the subject, it is questionable whether 'this way' can be the bare colourless, textureless referent of demonstratives. On the one hand, Raftopoulos claims that cognition only affects reference by determining *where* and *on what* attention is focused; it does not affect the way the person perceives the visual scene. On the other hand, he is interested in according a subject-specific way in which the data impinges on the perceiver. What Raftopoulos perhaps wants to maintain is the fact of this special mode of presentation causally triggering the utterance of the word 'this' in a non-conceptual way, so that these subject-specific variants can coexist with the 2.5D invariants causing the perceptual recognition of the same object across changes in space and time. Whether or not this is the intended significance of Raftopoulos's assertion, it is an extremely difficult position, like having your cake and eating

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[16] See Raftopoulos, 'Reference, Perception and Attention'.

[17] Ibid.

it as well. On the one hand, Raftopoulos wishes to procure the referent of 'this' as only causally conditioned, where the semantic content of thisness is not intended to enter into the perceptual content of the referent. At the same time, he desires to have the state of referring as accessible to cognition. Here again we see a convoluted exercise of achieving a circular closure between the pre-semantic causation of a pre-given object and its semantic representation.

There are similar logistical problems with regard to the phenomenon of memory evocation in general, whether this memory is conceived as conscious or unconscious, long term or short term, working in the bottom-up or in the top-down level, whether 2.5D objects fall back on memory of a familiar outline to disambiguate their own spatial boundaries, or on the memory of general features to obtain a full conceptual dressing. Raftopoulos is not clear about what theory of memory he intends to deploy in his account of non-conceptual reference, but one can claim along Wittgensteinian lines that all the traditional theories of memory, whether in its conscious or unconscious brand, whether causal or conceptual, have certain inevitable pitfalls. Memory is traditionally viewed as a storage system: Plato viewed it as a piece of wax, Locke conceived it to be a storehouse of ideas, while for Aristotle it figured as a reservoir of traces. For all these theories, remembering X is retrieving a mental image of X and parading it before the mind's eye. Recognising X is juxtaposing and comparing the current impression of X with the retrieved image. This of course is meant to be the *modus operandi* of conscious memory. Let us see how/whether this mechanism can be applied to what is claimed to be 'unconscious memory', which is supposed to play a role in the congregation of stimuli into 2D surfaces, in transmuting them into 3D cones, and further in the pre-conceptual reference to the same 2.5D objects repeating itself as the ground of perceptual recognition of the same object across changes in time, space and other viewing conditions. Since the representation of 2D surfaces and the 3D cones stored in early memory are all *ex hypothesi* unconscious, the first cannot act as

the relevant cue for the arousal of the latter for the subsequent operation of forming 3D representations. Similar remarks apply to the top-down operations of factors like familiarity and attitude, supposedly acting upon the unconscious (or rather phenomenally conscious) 2.5D objects to disambiguate them. Conscious memory operations, if conceived in the fashion of these traditional theories, would fare no better. Take the examples of remembering having wished to do such and such, or having meant so and so, or what a perfect number is. As these do not involve having an image in mind, the conceptual vision of a table too does not necessarily involve its comparison with a memory-image of a table previously perceived. And even if it does, having a mental image of a table or of any X would not be a sufficient condition for remembering X, for the simple reason that identifying an image as an image of the past itself presupposes memory and has no explanatory efficacy in an account of memory. Further, what is claimed to be the memory-image of X cannot itself carry the signature of being an image of X; it falls back on our recognition of this image as an image of X. And this recognition cannot fall back on a third image Y to connect the memory-image of X with the perceptual image of the same, on pain of infinite regress. The inherent opacity of the ostended object, the act of ostension, physical pictures or models, silent speech, act of intention and mental images naturally transmit to the memory-images as well.[18]

  One may of course abandon the imagist theory of memory in favour of the physiological trace-theory (originally endorsed

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[18] *PI* 645–51; Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, eds G. H. Von Wright and Heikki Nyman, trans. C. G. Luckhardt and M. A. E. Aue (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), vol. II (henceforth *RPP*), I 468; *PI* 595–96, II p. 231; Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, eds G. H. Von Wright and Heikki Nyman, trans. C. G. Luckhardt and M. A. E. Aue (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1998), vol. I, 837; Z 661–64. See H. J. Glock, *A Wittgenstein Dictionary* (New York: Blackwell, 2005), for a comprehensive account of Wittgenstein's treatment of memory.

by William James and Kohler). According to this theory, we remember X only if the original experience of X leaves a physiological trace in the brain, both connected isomorphically with each other. Raftopoulos's account is more congenial to the trace-theory, with or without his commitment to isomorphism. Let us now activate Wittgenstein's critique of this physiological trace-theory of memory in the broad framework of his general contentions against psycho-physical parallelism or neurological foundationalism (*Z* 608–19; *RPP* I, 220, 903–9). One can note three trends in Wittgenstein's critique, which are however closely interrelated. Firstly, phenomena like perceiving and remembering cannot be restrained within a closely bound reservoir; secondly, this explanatory model of memory is bound to be circular; and thirdly, any such theory would have to be conducted in a causal-cum-mechanical model that can never capture the concept of remembering adequately.

We may open up the first point of the critique with a paraphrase of a rhetorical question posed in *Z* 608: why should one be confined to a small enclosure to give it the look of a system? Once one extends the space, it no longer retains the closed character with a centre (i.e., the beginning points of axioms, inference rules, definitions). Rather, a system gets sensitised to the butterfly effects of the initial conditions and ruptures into a non-system; the gaps or changes in the initial conditions open up further gaps and further intractable distractions. It is in the way that the axioms flesh out into derivations and the derivations disperse into further derivations that the order is to be found; the order is not to be read off the pre-applicational content of the axioms, definitions and rules of derivation with which the system is supposed to originate. The plant can be read not in the seeds, but in the entire history through which the plant generated seeds and the seeds generated further plants. The derivative power is not cramped in the lump of a seed, nor in the originary lumps of axioms and definitions, but the way they burst in the actual germination and derivation in real time. Two seeds, exactly the same, can shoot forth

different plants, and two seeds markedly different can germinate the same kind of plants. This does not compel us to find an inherent sameness or an inherent difference in the isolated chunk of the seed, but in the way it is enmeshed in its history of producing and being produced by plants. It is the way that the disruptions and anomalies are dissolved into the *even spreading out of space into objects*, and not *objects resting in space* in the shape of seedy lumps foreclosing whatever is to come out of its enclosed boundary. It is in this sense that Wittgenstein talks of the system not necessarily continuing further in the direction of the centre, and of order proceeding from chaos (*Z* 608). The neurological theory of perception and reference is under the sway of this ossification of space into an passive reservoir, of dissecting thoughts into microscopic phases of milliseconds and matching them isomorphically with neurological correlates. Once we appreciate that plants and thoughts erupt into space and are not caused to happen *in* space, we can also appreciate that both the plant and our thoughts happen causelessly. It is in this sense that perception can occur without leaving a trace behind, remembering can happen without a cause, without a store in the memory. Just as a plant can generate the same kind of plant without depositing all its characteristics in the frozen shape of a seed, similarly psychological regularities can also happen without physiological origin (*Z* 608–11).

Wittgenstein goes on to establish this point with a vivid illustration in *Z* 612. Here he speaks of some rendition of a dictated note, not by rules of shorthand writing, nor by any reproducible rule of translation, nor by cartography. There are certain lines, gaps and marks, which the person later follows to reproduce the original text, but altogether there is no structural connection that can be laid out in precise rules of symbolism. However, if anything in this haphazard set of signs is altered or destroyed, she is at a loss, there is a jarring effect in her reading, or she lapses into a careless way of reading, or is not able to reproduce at all. This illustration can be used in stark contrast with that of Raftopoulos, where he sets out to show how his

own theory of perception, reference, retention and the various phases of attention gets implemented in a search task. This task is the customary experiment used by psychologists, where the subject is instructed about the specific feature of an object, asked to retain it in his memory, recall it later, and then find the target-object from amongst a lot of distracters. For Raftopoulos, the dictation would amount to a description of target-objects to be revived from memory later on, and there would be an absolute identity of pre-given symbols in the dictation. The utterance of each of these symbols creates a template in the visual memory of the hearer, to be stored in the working memory even after the stimulus (here the dictation) is withdrawn.

Here, the principal upshot of Wittgenstein's objection is to show that there is no one–one correspondence between psychological and neurological phenomena. One cannot say that the whole text was stored in the stretch of marks isomorphically, that each mark or intermediate space in the note jotted down has a one–one correspondence with an original line or word in the dictation; so that seeing this mark or space, that original word or line may be readily recalled. The person jotting down the dictation does not hang each word or sentence or gaps in between with a corresponding mark or intermediary gaps in his notes *explicitly*, for to do this he must hold the whole text in front of him and lay out the rules of translation. It is not that each mark the person writes down produces a corresponding trace in the brain, so that with seeing each of them, the relevant trace is revived. How can seeing a mark call up the embedded trace in the brain? As the second term of relation is absent, it is not possible to see a correspondence between the two. And if the retrievable item is already present, then one does not need this elaborate exercise of hauling it up, or creating this correlation. The crux of this illustration is to insist that if the written set of marks does not store the dictated content, what is there in the nervous system that serves as a complete reservoir? There may be a rough outline of a system—the starting point of its axioms and the last conclusion one derives, but not a precise

layout of the intermediary steps of derivation. Similarly, one may think of a natural law that covers the start of his chaotic jotting till the end, the entire stretch in this sense having a rough correspondence with dictated notes, but there is no systematic connection in the intermediary stage. One may think of one's birth and death as correlated with physiology, but not the stages in between.

To address the second point of the critique: suppose we let it pass that with each mark jotted on the paper, the note-taker is able to haul up an associated word or expression, this would neither be the cause of memorising, nor a non-circular definition of memory. Hauling up the relevant trace itself involves the notion of memory, for the trace has to be recognised as the trace left by *this* mark.

Thirdly, if this process of a mnemonic hauling up of a relevant trace is just a mechanical or non-recognitional operation, that process cannot be said to be the case of memory. To say this would be as uninteresting as to say that nerves have a memory (*RPP* I 220). It would be more picturesquely absurd to say that the footprints left by a bear on the wet sand have a memory, or rather, that footprints previously hidden under some leaves or twigs or depressed in a hole, later surfacing to view, is a case of memorising. And then just as one needs to infer the presence of the bear from the footprints, in remembering an event one will also need to infer it from the trace in the nervous system. However, even this analogy will not work, for unlike the bear's mark, the trace or the neuronal assembly stored in the temporal cortex is not available to the subject to serve as the ground of inference. As per the neurological account, the cued feature is decoded by a particular neuronal assembly and fed back to the IT cortex, thereby activating only those neurons that respond to the cued feature. When the subject is asked to recall, whether it is a case of selecting a target-object from a lot of other options, or recalling only one target that was previously perceived, the cells representing the different stimuli engage in a mutually suppressive interaction; and ultimately the particular assembly

that represents the cued feature rises to the surface, while assemblies responding to the non-target stimuli are suppressed. Though recall is due to the top-down activation of the cells originating in working memory, Raftopoulos repeatedly asserts that the relation between the neuronal assembly decoding the target-feature and the present perception is causal and not conceptual. Indeed, since we are not conscious of the neuronal assembly stored in our IT cortex, how can our conscious perception relate to the similar features decoded in the neurons? The neurological account of memory *has* to be causal-cum-mechanical; it puts the human organism on the same footing as a dictaphone spool, and compares his retention with the alteration of the spool that the voice leaves behind, and projects the spool's reproducing the voice as a case of remembering (*RPP* I 220).

Overall, the fundamental point of attack is against the very conception of one–one correlation based on the absolute identity of units—the presupposed chunks of objects lying there in space with inert and idle vacuums in between. For Wittgenstein, psychological phenomena do not occur through a passive interface between pre-given objects. Rather, the very identities are shaped in and through our actions—it is our actions that break, bend and blend space into objects, into their mutual interaction and their dispersal and reversal. So the distinction between an incomplete jotting (like the one illustrated above) and a complete and accurate record reproducible by commonly intelligible rules of translation is actually an internal distinction: it is a distinction *within* the ways you enact the units. It is not a distinction where the latter faithfully follows pre-given identities and the former jumbles them, distorts them or leaves them out. The difference between accurate and inaccurate record, complete and incomplete retention, correct and incorrect memory, does not lie in the capacity to catch the absolute identities. These differences lie within the same presupposed framework of simples, within the complete or incomplete activation of this pre-established set. Memory and retention actually boil down to creating aspectual

interlocks between a set of imageries, the same exercise of regression and progression among duplicated slices of object, which we call the matching of past, present and future. The correct and complete representation from a haphazard storage (as in Wittgenstein's illustration) shows that memory does not work through an isomorphic neurological reservoir, either in an elliptical or a non-elliptical way. Memory works through actions and procedures—through autonomous cues that do not fall back on a pre-applicational storage, required to start off the usage. As noted in the previous chapter, 'Slab' does not need to hide the other words—'Bring me a'—in order to activate itself, the pawn does not need to hide the shape and materials of the queen in its own body to adopt queen-like movements. Similarly, the activity of one–one correlation or the technique of aspectual interlock between past, present and future is foundationless in the sense that it does not fall back on a repertoire of traces and imageries with extra-linguistic correspondences. In this sense, one should interpret Wittgenstein as saying that there may be psychological correlation (i.e., correlation of behaviour and not of images) without neurological ones. And one can further say that it is actions that forge a rough correspondence between behaviour and the nervous system in terms of beginning and end, but not in the intermediate phases.[19]

In fine, the principal trend of Wittgenstein's critique against the standard theories of memory is in keeping with his general insight about meaning itself. Once we delink the sign from the signified, the ostender from the ostended, the bearer of meaning from the meaning itself, we never achieve meaning. If we delink the mnemonic cue and trace from each other, we can never join them up in memory.

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[19] In continuation with such remarks, Wittgenstein often seems to concede that the physiology may spark off the action as its external cause and also mark its end, but does not enter into the plethora of perception, retention memory and concepts which are actually an expanse of uses and behaviours. I shall track the problems in this position and attempt to give a different reading of such observations in the next section.

Wittgenstein has more specific arguments to offer against the physiological foundation of reference and perception. According to the physiological account, the two retinas will cause only double vision; looking at a tree with one's head inclined on one side would inevitably cause an inclined image all of which is cognitively impenetrable and later rectified by informed knowledge about the nature of retina and the complex stages of late vision. As exhorted by the neurologists, the storage systems in the bottom-up level will unconsciously work on our memory and help revise the inclined image into an upright one. Wittgenstein points out that it is our seeing that is primary, and computing the character of this vision from the known physiology is a secondary process. We can add that once the neurologists start with a reversal of the primary and the secondary, they have to preach that it is the knowledge of our intricate mechanism of vision and its corrective technique of transmuting these inverted or inclined images into correct ones that are necessary for referring to proto-objects. Here Wittgenstein poses the obvious objection: the fact that we might not know anything about the existence and nature of the retina, or the neurology of vision, and yet have a correct vision from the very outset, shows that the hypothesis of neurological foundation of vision is mistaken and redundant. And one cannot insist that with the current input of this knowledge of visual mechanism, this new information about the nature of the retina gets embedded into our memory-storage and thus plays a role in correcting our vision (*Z* 613–14). On such a theory, if one covers one eye and sees only with the other one, she should enjoy a simultaneous presentation of vision and darkness. And the limitless visual field that we *see* in complete darkness is inexplicable on the neurological claim of vision as having a one–one correspondence with the nature of the retina.

In fact, Raftopoulos's strenuous efforts to keep reference and conception physiologically separate hangs on a precarious balance that always seems to fall apart, collapsing them into an indissoluble whole. The top-down effects are said to occur only after the early vision has performed the preliminary task of

parsing the scene into proto-objects. But again, as we have noted, the top-down effects are required to complete their boundaries. Raftopoulos himself concedes that feature integration and object segregation are not a separate stage in visual processing, occurring at a higher phase of a neatly linear hierarchy. To say that object-attention is an emergent phenomenon due to the interactive competition among the cortical areas[20] is to concede its evanescent, incomplete and unreal character, its status of a merely theoretical postulate. But Raftopoulos's disciplinary commitments will not let him admit this. He turns this oscillating nature of object-attention into a *tertium quid* between the two mutually exclusive regions of reference and attention. He says that object-attention mediates the passage between the cognitively impenetrated processing of visual referring and the cognitively penetrable processing of conception. It is said that when an explicit instruction is given to the subject, whether it is a case of finding a matching object, or reading off the dictation from jotted notes, it starts the process of object-attention in the subject. In this process the neurons in the IT region encoding the relevant feature of the object are more strongly activated than those encoding other features, due to working memory. In this way, Raftopoulos turns object-attention into a conductor of cognitive influences in visual processing, a mediator between the conceptual and non-conceptual, cognitive and non-cognitive. It is this link that is bizarrely non-conceptual and non-cognitive that seems to be the most interesting and intriguing element in Raftopoulos's story. His oscillation between reference and conception does not lead him to give up their dichotomy; rather, one can say that it leads him to turn reference into a real slippery zone in the cortex, a region of uncertain topology in the cortical pattern, corresponding to the uncertain and slippery interplay between reference and conception. It may be remembered in this context that for Wittgenstein, the dismissal of terminal points in space equally rules out the possibility of some specially slippery

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[20] Raftopoulos, 'Reference, Perception and Attention', p. 354.

zones of space, a real slide from one point to another, in the same way as it rules out real paths and real gaps.

This twilight zone of slipperiness is sought to be fortified and implemented in concrete illustrations. Raftopoulos approvingly quotes A. Clark in claiming that when one utters colour-words, say 'Red', to a subject as an instruction to find the appropriate colour (from a number of presented options), 'the word comes down from one-high that it is RED that is sought'.[21] The word 'red' ignites the storehouse of memory, innervates the appropriate neuronal assembly that starts off the process of spatial attention—a process that is claimed to activate neutrally *all* the cells in the IT cortex encoding any feature in the visual field. Object-attention is a mediating space between the conceptual features of red and all the features of stimuli competing in the neutral region of spatial attention, and finally pushes up the appropriate assembly corresponding to the chromatic feature of red. In this way, the appropriate chromatic target is identified. Thus, Raftopoulos and Clark strive to find the precise point of space and time at which the conceptual and the non-conceptual meet. They identify this as starting from the IT cortex, occurring after 125 milliseconds of stimulus onset, and gradually spreading down to the lower visual areas of the cortex. *This neurological endeavour to find the specific space-time correlates of reference and conception as well as their interface once again shows a pre-designed collation of objects and representations, contrived in the model of cramping space into impenetrable objects drawn out in the one-dimensional axis of time.*

1.4 *Constructing the Positive Upshot of Wittgenstein's Critique*

Raftopoulos presents his narration of visual perception as a causal process. In fact, he plays the language-game of causation, thus operating with the characteristic features of this game,

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[21] Ibid., p. 355.

like falsifiability, epistemological gaps, observational and experimental confirmation, externality of the two events as cause and effect, etc. But while starting with a causal game, he unwittingly turns it into a reason game of aspectual interlock—into a cyclic closure of dispersal and reversal. As a result, he cannot appreciate or preserve the nuances of the causal game—the openness, indeterminacies and the presuppositions—that would inevitably accrue to an account of visual reference.

We need to understand Wittgenstein's notion of a cause before we can appreciate the difference between language-games with cause and those with reason. Like language in general, the expressions 'cause' and 'effect' are not labels to be clamped on discrete events situated at different points of time, with a real link connecting the two. Like other cases, causal language-games too are sophisticated extensions of our primitive behaviour. Wittgenstein mentions some prototypical occasions from which our causal expressions take off—the collision of billiard balls, pulling a string (traction), clockworks which combine both collisions and tractions, human reactions on being hit physically or emotionally, and in some cases the statements based on Humean succession. It is important to realise that when we see or operate with physical collisions and tractions, or react to being hit, hold others responsible, these events do not contain the real essence of causation which we passively represent in our cognition, to be further expressible in language and to be followed up by suitable actions. On the contrary, all these expressions, like 'collision', 'impact', 'generation', 'action and reaction', 'tit for tat', 'you hit me so I hit back', 'so', 'therefore', etc., are shaped by our primitive and spontaneous actions. Causal propositions are as much paradigms of description as the 'reason'-paradigms of mathematics of logic. However, one must be careful not to construe either of these paradigms as an a priori human category schematising the raw, uninterpreted manifold in the Kantian fashion.

Now, while causal propositions are grammatical paradigms of linking things together, unlike the case of reason paradigms,

the following gaps in the link are built into the causal paradigm itself. First, there must be an epistemological uncertainty in knowing one or more links in the causal mechanism—that we might *not* know the cause of an effect or the effect of a cause is a part of the paradigm. Second, there may be an uncaused cause; and third, a cause might not be necessitating, i.e., the same causes may produce different effects, whereas the same effects may also be produced by different causes. Wittgenstein's example of two identical seeds A and B giving rise to different plants[22] is a typical example of the first option of the third feature of causal paradigm. Lastly, the chain of causes goes on ad infinitum, but reasons ultimately peter out. All these features pertain to the mutual externality of the cause and effect built into the paradigm; they do not constitute each other's identity, one cannot read the cause into the effect and vice versa. Interestingly, this anomalous behaviour of causation is sought to be accommodated in the paradigm, not by forcibly packing a hidden, unexplored difference in the apparently identical seeds, but by stretching out their differences in their respective histories, i.e., in stretching out the identities of seeds A and B in their being produced respectively from A-type plant and B-type plant. So the grammar of causal expressions is not to create a path, not to coalesce the cause and the effect. A cause moves to the effect, but the effect does not move back to the cause. When a cause does not produce its usual effect or different causes produce the same effect, we take it as a digestible shock. But when the sphere of reason shows up these exceptions and anomalies, when 2 + 2 sometimes leads to 4 and sometimes to 6, we do not stretch out these differences in the histories of 2 + 2; we settle the anomaly within the ahistorical path of reason. We either say 'I have miscalculated,' or 'There was no 2 + 2 in the first place,' or 'The ideal 4 units are hidden there beyond the empirical process.'

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[22] Ludwig Wittgenstein, 'Cause and Effect: An Intuitive Awareness', *Philosophia*, vol. 6, nos 3–4 (1976), pp. 409–25. I also rely heavily on Glock, *A Wittgenstein Dictionary*, with respect to his entry on 'Causation'.

Causal games involve an engagement with the process or the mechanism through which an object, say a litmus paper, turns red when dipped into acid, and thus with the composition and interaction of the concerned objects. This game of exploring the mechanism, seeing where they lead, is another way of preserving openness, a refusal to close the path. In reason games on the other hand, the process and the result are equivalent; when we say that *this* face altered into *this* through *this* transformation, there is simultaneously a transition to the new and at the same time the new is seen in the light of the old. It is, as we have seen in the previous chapter, a dispersal and reversal of white light passed through two crossing prisms (*RFM* III-42). It emerges that when we say that mathematics and logic turn causation or causal experiments into reasoned definitions, or convert a 'real process' into a flat physiognomic cycle, we must be wary of the misleading suggestion that while causation is grounded on full-blooded reality constrained by its given richness, mathematics only turns this real process into two-dimensional fragments. Indeed, Wittgenstein does sometimes speak in this vein, but the predominant trend of his later thoughts show *that both causal language and reason language are paradigms of description.* The openness and intractability of the causation is as much a part of the contrived paradigm as the inviolability of the 'rational' game of mathematics and logic. Just as there is no external constraint that turns a cause into reason, there is no extra-linguistic pressure that prevents the reverse mechanism of turning a reason game into a causal game, something that Mill did in his declaration of mathematical propositions as empirical generalisations on the behaviour of objects. This bilateral rupture of the givenness of experience and that of rational or conceptual essence itself constitutes the autonomy of grammar, as we have seen in the previous chapter.

It is within these Wittgensteinian insights that Raftopoulos's unwary transformation of a causal game into a reason game has to be understood. Contrary to what Raftopoulos opines (along with the other neuro-psychologists), it is not the flat,

two-dimensional fragments at the originary point of visual perception that gradually generate thicker and more complete representations through a structure of milliseconds. Rather, it is motion and action, starting from the infant's movements—like the oscillation of eyeballs, turning around the head, and gradually rotating its whole body, moving up to the standing posture and walking—all these that bend, blend and break space into full-fledged perceptions. As we have already seen in the previous chapter, a hypothetical construction of one-dimensional perception can be made intelligible only on the further hypothesis that the perceivers themselves have a one-dimensional body that can only move in one direction, say forward; it is thus incapable of sweeping out space into other dimensions. And this exercise of sweeping out is nothing but action. Images delinked from action, even set out in the fine-grained axis of milliseconds, each preceding image getting progressively thickened out by the next with an infinitesimal difference, will not inject the required life and dynamism into the system. All the intermediary linkages—the highly sophisticated tools of FFS, LRP, 2D images, s-ds of 2.5D images thickening at mind-boggling speed—still have to fall back on the simple incidence of human action and participation. *The progressive swelling out of the flat, incomplete, discontinuous images into full-fledged objects is not a swelling out of representations, but a thickening out of actions.* And the difference amongst these levels of action is not fundamental or categorial, but rather an internal difference of degree, where the so-called primal action with its relative stasis and flatness is forever ready to burst forth its 'two-dimensional' boundaries to fill out into more substantial realities.

Indeed, the history of neurological evidences itself shows every case of depth-processing as involving an action of one kind or other. When David Marr insisted that the fragmentary 2D images with deformed discontinuities of luminance have the inbuilt constraints to move to 2.5D fullness, this itself betrays how the neuroscientists' postulate of flat images are ruptured by

3D invasions. This virtually turns out to be a demonstration as to how the relatively confined and static actions erupt into more expansive and creative activation of the world. While faced with a task of stereoscopic processing of a lone object in the environment, we inevitably engage in the *action* of evaluating the disparity between two objects in the field of vision. A forced confinement inside an airplane, with our eyes stuck to a fragment of a homogeneous patch of cloudless blue, would not afford a vision of depth, unless accompanied by locomotional adjustment of the visual field or by the memory *exercise* of matching 'past' and 'present' representations. Perception of depth by the phenomenon technically known as 'parallax' also virtually boils down to an action. Parallax is the *active* phenomenon of bringing a displacement or difference in the apparent position of an object by viewing it along two different lines of sight, and thereby effectively contributes in depth perception. Again, it is the perceivers *qua* agents and not passive recipients of images who utilise their 'blur perceptions' or patterns of retinal focus and defocus, and calculate the balance and imbalance of retinal focus of the proximate and distal level.[23] Moreover, 2.5D representations are traditionally defined as viewer-centric—as involving an understanding of the relationship of the object and ourselves within an environment, an understanding which is embossed in actions.

As we have seen, Matthen himself equates visual reference with a viewer-centric representation that is solely confined to present action. But his view does not support our standpoint; rather, it can only be utilised as a suggestive opposition that effectively highlights the exact significance of our attempted Wittgensteinian construction. Firstly, as already noted, Matthen's view of reference as confined to action is unduly

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[23] I have relied on internet resources for collecting the relevant data on David Marr, stereopsis and parallax. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parallax; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stereopsis; and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Marr_(neuroscientist) (accessed 30 May 2018).

restrictive, for people do refer even when they are not exercising their limbs with the target-object. Besides, Matthen (along with Raftopoulos and other neuro-psychologists) has a myopic view of the ontology of action itself, a view that delimits actions to physical movements of the limbs to bring about changes in the physical world; while for Wittgenstein, wish, will, intentions are not putative mental causes that *antecede* actions, rather they all mesh into a single continuum. The neurological narratives do not often accord an explicit ontology to the representations: while they sometimes suggest a primal ontological position of a purely mental and self-interpretive entity, more often they incline towards an identity theory equating the representations to neural happenings. Neither option appreciates the primordiality of actions, its immaculate character absorbing the putative independence of neural events.

Wittgenstein in his *Philosophical Remarks*[24] (*PR*, pp. 100–101) has extremely sophisticated and clinching arguments to offer in favour of an enactive approach to perception and reference.

> Suppose all the parts of my body could be removed until only one eyeball were left; and this were to be firmly fixed in a certain position, retaining its power of sight…. I wouldn't be able to perceive any part of myself, and supposing my eyeball to be transparent for me, I wouldn't be able to see myself in the mirror either. (Ibid.)

Here, Wittgenstein is presenting the impossible thought experiment of removing all body parts and thereby removing all movements and actions. Removal of the second eye takes away the coordination of the two eyes to perceive dimension; making the eyeball transparent is to stop all movement—stop all enaction of the opaque basis for the projection of the image

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[24] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Remarks*, ed. Rush Rhees, trans. Raymond Hargreaves and Roger White (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975).

on the retina, thus removing all efforts of coordinating the two retinal images.

That there is no real datum of incomplete, flat sensations given in a real point of time, even for some milliseconds before progressively thickening out into conceptual representations, may be made evident by using a metaphor advanced by Polanyi.[25] Suppose we place ourselves in the shoes of a blind person learning to 'see' through a cane, where from the initial feeling of the handle against our palms and fingers we gradually become accustomed to using it as a probe to feel our way around. The immediate sense of the impact of the cane on our hand is transferred to an awareness of the tip of the cane as it taps on the objects we are exploring. With further experience, even this awareness of the tip vanishes, or is rather absorbed into the feelings of the objects probed by the cane. Now it is quite clear that none of these phases presents us with an experience of raw tactual datum of fragmentary, flat and discontinued patches gradually welling up. Rather, it is an internal contrast amongst representations which progressively becomes richer and more complex by incorporating more and more terms of relation into its network. It is a case where the relatively simple action of holding the cane thickens out into an extended rubric that absorbs a greater expanse of space into itself. This is a causal process which we customarily describe in terms of a temporal progression, taking care of the mechanism or process stepwise, and also taking care to accommodate epistemological lags in between, and finally presenting the causal chain as in principle going on for ever, never coming to a logical terminus. We shall be turning this 'causal' narrative into a 'reasoned' one, when we turn the process into a circular path to merge the process and the result into an aspectual interlock. Then we shall see the initial experience of the cane against the palm as necessarily moving on to the extended awareness of the objects and the latter as

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[25] Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967). I have relied on Jones's analysis of Polanyi's cane analogy presented in *Physics as Metaphor*, p. 201.

reverting back to the former. We make the objects lying at the tip of the cane backtrack gradually into the initial tip of the cane with which we started, thus expanding the starting tip into the new experience of objects and again seeing the new experience as identical with the old. It is in the same way that we lay out the process of visual figuration where flat, broken surfaces are expanded into substantial objects only to recoil back into their shadowy rudiments, thus creating a cyclic closure between the two.

If Raftopoulos analysed tactual perceptions (both the tactual contacts of sighted persons and of the blind man with the cane) in the same style as he analyses visual perceptions, then he would probably treat the initial feeling of the handle too as a flat, fragmentary referent which gradually thickens out into more full-fledged feelings of the depth, texture, boundary of the object. Further, he is likely to say that though actions may invariably play a role in generating touch-representations, actions themselves fall neatly outside the ontology of the latter.

In this respect, the theory of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika represents a typically anti-Wittgensteinian position. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas would insist that in none of the types of cognition (*pratyakṣa*, *anumiti*, *upamiti* and *śābda*[26]) is action even a cause or effect of cognition, not to speak of its being imbued in its ontological identity. Cause and effect are related to each other in terms of invariable and unconditional antecedence and consequence, and actions are never related with cognitions in this way. Actions are defined as a cause of conjunction and disjunction of the organism with different parts of space,[27] and this makes them cause the sense–object contact required in cognition; which reduces them (i.e., actions) to the status of cause of cause, i.e., an accidental accompaniment (*anyathāsiddha*) with respect to cognition.

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[26] *Pratyakṣa:* perceptual cognition due to sense–object contact; *anumiti:* inferential cognition through a mark; *upamiti:* cognition through comparison; and *śābda:* cognition through verbal testimony.

[27] Prashastapada, *Prashastapada Bhashyam: Prathama Bhaga*, trans. Damodarasrama (Kolkata: Damodar Asrama, 1988), Part I, 5.

This view is aptly summarised by Alva Noe as looking upon the relation between action and perception as only 'instrumental'. While this kind of view does concede that action and perception have lot to do with each other, yet the relation is, on ultimate analysis, non-constitutive. Noe compares the relation to that between the lugging around of a camera and the resulting picture, our actions being merely preliminary to and disconnected with the resultant perception.[28] This mode of analysis may no doubt be applied to the blind man's perception with the cane as well. Here, the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika model of cognition in general and perception in particular roughly corresponds to that of Raftopoulos in its structure, in so far as both systems start with a pre-constructed object, slice it up in discrete points of time and forge a neat division between cognition and action. The externality of space containing pre-given objects impinging on our sense organs through causation is the more vital point of concordance between the two—a view we shall try to displace from Wittgenstein's perspective in due course. (This shall be discussed more extensively in the last section.)

To come back to the neuro-psychological mechanism of closing fragmentary 2D rudiments and full-fledged 3D objects into a circle—such operations are performed with sophisticated machineries like CCD cameras utilised to procure 2D colour images and 2.5D range-data, various versions of stereoscope to extract the horizontally disparate retinal images of the two eyes. Random dot stereograms provide us with half-images having 10,000 small dots, auto stereograms, computer stereoscopes, etc., all geared up to demonstrate how two separate images afforded by two retinas are merged into one. Now what one needs to appreciate is that these machine displays do not follow the real temporal process that happens in our brain, but rather indoctrinate us to take it to be so, where all gaps, lacunae, contingencies and uncertainties are sought to be closed up in a formidable and stiflingly detailed account, laid out in a

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[28] See Noe, *Action in Perception*, chapter I, pp. 2–3.

microscopic structure. Once we are exorcised by making this surreptitious shift from causal game to reason game, we can engage in a practice of forging this split in our ordinary vision—to extract the putative raw data with which we are primarily confronted. Once convinced that the blind man sees the world through a series of jolts in his palms (of which he gradually becomes unconscious), we can go on to extract this raw sense-data *through* which we see the universe, the data about which we would have remained unconscious, had not the scientific machineries so graciously revealed them to us. We allot ourselves this adventurous task of dissecting our ordinary vision: we tell ourselves that is not the tree trunk that we are passing, but an elongated brown in our visual field. It is not the tree itself that looks smaller as we go further, or looks bigger as we approach nearer. Rather, we convince ourselves that what we actually see is simply a raw brownness—enlarging, changing, diminishing. That is not a bus passing, these are not schoolchildren treading along the footpath—resting as discrete objects—rather, they are all varying portions of a general visual background. That is not the sky, treetops and roofs above our heads, but simply a new set of colours and patterns that our visual field has taken on, accompanied by certain kinaesthetic sensations (what we call tilting our head back). We tell ourselves that on the whole what we see is just a variable continuum of shapes and colours, where what we call near or far, above or below, left and right, before, behind, are only constructed or inferred through unconscious visual processing. We do not need to prolong this narrative any further and may safely wind it up with a convenient 'And so on…'.

Now this may be a wonderful and highly recommendable exercise, but not as a project to extract the raw data of sensation or the s-d of 2.5D objects; rather, it is a project to extract the primal actions that progressively expand into richer ones, to carve out fuller space with fuller dimensions. To paraphrase Wittgenstein's observations, our task is not to close gaps and build bridges, but to describe the present geography of the

landscape more extensively (*RFM* IV 52). Our task is not to dissect objects into microscopic representations in the temporal axis with the illusive assurance that once we have explored all the gaps in their infinitesimal detail, we can be sure that we have closed all of them. Rather, our task is to sensitise ourselves to the primacy of actions, to see that they holistically absorb all neural events. If we need a dissective exercise, that should be engaged in tracking down not the primitive representations, but rather the primitive actions, i.e., to see how the primitive activation of representations is forever ready to burst forth into a more expansive landscape. Our common way of starting with certain primitive actions and of expanding them constitutes our common form of living. And it is within this common form of living that we are able to appreciate the difference between the causal game and the reason game that one may play with respect to visual reference and perception. It is against this common backdrop that the history of neurological theories of perception becomes intelligible, and the covert shift from a causal narrative to a reason closure is revealed and recognised.

Raftopoulos's claim that the visual demonstratives refer to incomplete, 2.5D edges and surfaces can be attacked with some tools commonly used in the philosophy of language. Consider such uses with 'this' or 'that': 'Is this the beginning?' 'No, this is the end.' 'Is this the middle?' 'Is that the figure or ground?' 'Is that one or many?' 'Is this a hallucination?' 'Is this real?' 'Is this a given datum or is this something I have constructed?' 'Is this an object?' And even, 'Is this two-dimensional or does this have a suggestion of depth?' We might be presented with fleeting visions for split seconds and then be posed with the above series of questions. Now, one can legitimately pose this question to Raftopoulos: since all these predications pertain to the very numerical identity of whatever is meant by 'this', since they question the initial boundary of the referent itself, and since these predications are applied legitimately and non-circularly, doesn't this show that the numerical identity of being a s-d of 2.5D object was *not* already encapsulated in the reference of

'this' or 'that'? For had it been so, then that very referential identity could not have been added to 'this' non-circularly as a predicate. Raftopoulos could of course reply that these alternative boundary predications belong to a higher and more sophisticated level of conceptualisation which is applied to the referent that has already been parsed initially as a unit by early vision. He would perhaps insist that since the nature of referring is pre-attentional and only phenomenally conscious, one might place the referent in the subject-position, and apply these predicates on a conceptual level. In other words, for Raftopoulos, the possibility of such interrogative predications shows that the same entity that figures non-conceptually, impenetrably and is possessed only of phenomenal consciousness can rise to the status of cognitively penetrable concepts endowed with access-consciousness in the predicative level. One could perhaps put this in a slightly different way: the same user of these language-games appears as an ordinary layperson in the referential level and as a neurologically informed subject in the predicative level. But as we have already noted, the question that persists is whether the predicates of 'oneness', 'manyness', 'being a sense-datum', 'being a concept' can attach to a professedly non-conceptual representation without sucking it into its conceptual folds. While Raftopoulos is playing the causal discourse where representations relate to each other *causally* and *non-conceptually*, like sound waves and a recording tape, he cannot mix this up with a conceptual discourse where the relation is cognitive, recognitional and recursive. In other words, he cannot retain the dictaphone spool as one term of the causal relationship and transform the sound waves as attaching predicatively to the former.

It is the same confusion that persists in Raftopoulos's assertion about the nature of a non-conceptual content P to the effect that: (*a*) P is in direct causal relation with the instantiated P-hood; (*b*) P is related through an indirect causal relation with the cognitive state of the subject; and (*c*) the principles of conceptualisation like familiarity, similarity, good figure, pregnanz, etc., influence

the parsing of the referent non-conceptually or causally, i.e., these principles are said to be hardwired into the referential processing of early vision.[29] Let us try to make sense of these assertions by invoking imageries and exploring possible routes of interpretations. Firstly, the ontological commitment to the property of P-hood is questionable, but since we have already addressed this point before, we shall let it pass in the present context. Now, to say that P is directly caused by P-hood is to say that it is not mediated by concepts or features that are seen as logically repeatable or recursible along a multiplicity of occasions. It is like an inanimate object being hit by another, ruling out the possibility of representing the character of that hitting as being relevantly similar in other contexts. But what does it mean to say that the content is only related through an indirect causal relation with the cognitive states of the subject? We can try to understand this through creating contrastive imageries depicting the difference between conceptual and non-conceptual content. To say that a content red is conceptual is to hold that redness is seen as a shareable membrane among different individuals, gradually extending from one to the other indefinitely, while to hold red as a non-conceptual content is to say that this red membrane secretively gets underneath the content of the subject's state, catching it unawares. More specifically, to say that it is the subject's unrecognised familiarity or similarity with past objects that determines referential identity is to give way to two metaphors. First, it is as if the husk of that (familiar) object comes underneath the content P to mould it in such a way that it starts a chain reaction whereby the husk transits along all recurrences of P. Second, this husk works at a distance through a causal chain, ultimately reaching the non-conceptual content lying at the other end. If Raftopoulos's account of reference and content can legitimately be thrust into these metaphors, its flaws attain a picturesquely conspicuous character.

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[29] Raftopoulos, 'The Cognitive Impenetrability of Perception and Theory Ladenness'.

This deep-rooted tension between conceptualism and non-conceptualism underlies Raftopoulos's explicit characterisation of the principles of perceptual processing as 'non-conceptual' and yet 'computational'.[30] This is an account that he specifically undertakes against the theories of E. S. Spelke, D. Marr, A. Ullmann W. Richards, etc. The target of Raftopoulos's attack is their claim that our perceptual system employs certain principles reflecting the geometry and physics of the universe, principles that have propositional content and figure as assumptions about the world. They are said to have the status of rules that our perceptual system stores in the memory so that they can be used as premises for perceptual inferences. Through these premises, the perceptual system solves the problem of underdetermination, i.e., infers full-fledged objects from the flat, fragmentary double images of the retina. Against this theory, Raftopoulos asserts that these principles cannot be conceptual; rather, they are 'hardwired' into our system. They indeed reflect the higher-order regularities of the physical objects and the geometry of our environment and get absorbed into our perceptual system through a causal interaction with the environment in the gradual process of evolution. Thus, these principles allow us to log on to the medium-sized lumps of matter in the world, with discriminatory capacities for individuating them and tracking them down through the passage of space and time. But all this is done, Raftopoulos repeats, in a non-conceptual way. To say that they are hardwired into the system is to say that they are not available to introspection, i.e., to cognition or conceptualisation. These principles are not representable as general propositions or premises enabling us to infer the higher stages of inference. Raftopoulos further argues that to say that they are operational constraints hardwired into the system means that they are not states of perception having representational content. The states are formed by the spreading of activation and its modulation as it passes through the synapses. The hardwired constraints are computational or mathematical principles that describe the

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[30] Ibid.

automatic transitions between states of perception. So while the operational principles *describe* the transition between states and thereby determine their content, these principles themselves are not states of the system, nor content thereof. Having no representational content, they cannot be thought of as conceptual—they are, to repeat, hardwired into the perceptual circuits and are not represented anywhere. In no way can these constraints be construed as applying a conceptual net over perception.

Wittgenstein's possible rejoinder here is again rather predictable. The principles of any system cannot be computational or mathematical without having a paradigmatic or normative character. For Wittgenstein, computational or mathematical principles have the status of grammatical propositions; being paradigms of description, they are patently conceptual. The general principles through which our digestive procedure decomposes complex food substances into simple units, preserves a non-toxic ingredient for each of the innumerable toxic intakes, produces the exact amount of hormones for balancing and counterbalancing, cannot be called 'computational' for the simple reason that it involves no conceptual or paradigmatic exercise. Similarly, the putative computational character of the perceptual events actually belongs to the propositions that neurologists or psychologists deploy to describe the process of perception, and not to the process itself. This is the typical 'conceptual confusion' that psychology (and neurology) labour under, as pointed out by Wittgenstein in *PI* p. 232.[31] The normative undertones of

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[31] See also P. M. S. Hacker, 'The Relevance of Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Psychology to the Psychological Sciences', n.d., available at: http://info.sjc.ox.ac.uk/scr/hacker/docs/Relevance%20of%20W%27s%20phil.%20of%20psychol.%20to%20science.pdf (accessed 27 September 2017). Here Hacker points out that it makes no sense to speak of a brain or computer as doing calculations or following rules. The fact that they can only be *caused* to produce the same output as one following a rule, does not put this process on the same footing as the exercise of free choice that rule following essentially involves.

the acclaimed non-conceptual principles are further betrayed in Raftopoulos's admission of some 'constitutive standards of thinghood' that play their role in perception.[32] And if it is still insisted that these hardwired principles are computational in a non-conceptual way, i.e., if it is claimed that we trail real essences of thinghood in the environment without conceiving or representing them, then the question of the possible interface between the conceptual and the non-conceptual elements in perception would emerge as a notoriously insoluble problem.

We need to harp on this exercise of reverting our normal vision to flat sensations as an interesting illustration of the phenomenon of aspect-seeing. Wittgenstein holds that the difference between object-seeing and aspect-seeing, i.e., seeing and seeing as, is a difference in the mode of activity and reaction. The difference between *seeing* (usually thought to be a passive state) and *seeing as* (taken as an active procedure) is a *grammatical distinction*. Wittgenstein states that when we give out or respond to instructions of aspect-seeing of the form 'See ___ as ___', or 'Hear ___ as ___', 'we either react with these words in particular situations' or 'we react *to* these words by particular actions' (*Z* 208, discussed earlier; also *PI* II, section xi). Let us work out how Raftopoulos, on the other hand, when faced with a case of aspect-seeing, e.g., seeing a face as similar to another, or seeing a chest as a house, would situate this phenomenon within his theoretical framework. He would in all probability claim that the two perceivers, one seeing the chest objectually and the other seeing it aspectually as a house, are referring to the same non-conceptual content (the same set of 2.5D objects), but are carrying different storehouses of imprints in their conscious and unconscious memories. The second person is carrying a peculiar chest–house imprint in his cortical pattern, which the first person is not, so that in the case of the second person, the perception of the chest is causally connected with the concept

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[32] Raftopoulos, 'The Cognitive Impenetrability of Perception and Theory Ladenness'.

of the house under the principle of familiarity, while for the first person, the imprint being absent, this occasion does not arise. While both perceivers refer to the same set of primary referents, for the second perceiver this set undergoes a pendulum oscillation between two modes of neuronal assembly—*now* the referents are thickening out into an assembly corresponding to a chest, and *now* to a house. With the first perceiver, on the other hand, there is no such interactive competition among the neuronal assemblies alternatively decoding a chest and a house.

For Wittgenstein, however, these two perceivers neither enjoy a common set of representations (in the shape of 2.5D objects) nor do they undergo similar causal chains of representation through which their common referent progressively thickens out into the same concept. Nor are there different imprints in the memory causing different cortical patterns of alternative concepts in their brains. In aspect-perception, the perceiver does not carry a catalogue of shapes or imprints, in which the initial 2.5D objects are grafted by the principle of familiarity. Such claims to make sense have to be recast into an account causally linking *actions* and not passive states or representations; i.e., they have to be rephrased to mean that the present movement is effectively smoothed out by a previous practice (*Z* 208–10).

As already noted in the previous chapter, Wittgenstein holds both reference and description (conception) to be operations with signs—a name does not take us to an extra-linguistic referent, nor does interpretation of understanding carry us from uninterpreted signs to facts or sense. Similarly, understanding or interpretation does not carve out a path from bare s-d of 2.5D objects, or non-conceptual referents in early vision, to the full-fledged concepts. As Fregean sense or Russellian (and early Wittgensteinian) atomic facts do not pre-exist understanding, 2.5D objects too do not pre-exist either the phenomenon of reference or understanding. Both reference as well as understanding (or conception) take us from one set of signs to a more easily surveyable symbolism, or rather it takes us from one mode of behaviour to another. Saying that concepts apply to non-conceptual chunks, as Raftopoulos

does, is on the same footing as saying that one understands or conceptualises a clump of tree. Understanding a tree virtually amounts to understanding botanist conceptions or decoding the understanding of the person who planted it; similarly, we do not interpret the 2.5D or the 3D images presented by CCD cameras or stereoscopes; we understand what the neurologist wants us to capture and project. As already noted, grammar does not fall back on reference, whether it is ostended physically or mentally (in the shape of 2.5D objects or full-fledged images). Just as any attempt at verbal explanation throws us to the non-verbal and vice versa, similarly we are tossed to and fro between the early and later data of visual processing—between the putatively non-conceptual reference and late conceptualisation.

Lastly, it must be mentioned that though I have borrowed the blind man's cane metaphor from Polanyi via Jones,[33] perhaps both of them use this metaphor in a way that is different from Wittgenstein as well as Raftopoulos. Jones uses this metaphor to facilitate our return to the primitive, to haul up the unconscious to the conscious level, while for Raftopoulos such a deliberately contrived exercise would perhaps be a transaction between two concepts, for the actual referents *qua* referents (i.e., the s-d of 2.5D objects) cannot be brought up to the accessibly conscious level, as it figures in this deliberately designed operation. For Wittgenstein, as we have seen, this exercise would be a case of aspect-perception, which is primarily an action; in the present case, it is the procedure of splitting and enclosing the sensation and conception in an aspectual interlock.

It may further be mentioned that Jones's method of destabilising the traditional foundations of physics and philosophy, i.e., the staunchly realistic conceptions of space, time, number, relation between mind and matter, etc., involves the availability of a sumptuous store of imageries, without, however, the explicit cautionary measure that the imageries themselves, however luxurious and luminous they may seem, have to be

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[33] Jones, *Physics as Metaphor*.

activated in the extended field of language-games and forms of life. While Jones's style of writing offers ample suggestions for exploiting imaginative content in terms of action, and while he does point out that the concept of imagination must be seen in terms of collective participation, his excessive emphasis on constructing imageries at every step of his theoretical exposition may have the psycho-centric tendency of according an internal transparency to the images themselves—a tendency that later Wittgenstein fought against constantly. Thus, to press his novel idea of space as a continuum, or to demonstrate mind and matter as interpenetrated, Jones falls back on the Pribram-Bohm model of a hologram; he seeks to use its visual quality of all its points receiving light from all others to argue for the part–all fusion of mind and matter. While revamping the idea of space, Jones depicts it as an organic jungle with twisting vines and branches that are hollow and translucent, penetrating our body, so that each of us is 'like a vortex or a pattern of concentration among all the flows and channels'.[34] While we have all through been using Jones's explicit observations to supplement Wittgenstein's scanty and scattered style of exposition, we have to equip ourselves with constant reminders of Wittgenstein's anti-psychologism. Wittgenstein would deliberately desist from the rich rhetoric of imageries after a certain point, lest it displace the primacy of actions.

2. McDowell's Treatment of Non-conceptualism

This section presents a detailed exposition of McDowell's critique of non-conceptualism with the aim of showing how different versions of this theory become vulnerable to his attack. It also takes note of McDowell's ingenious strategy of combining the theory of non-conceptualism, the doctrine of private language as well as the mental causation view of action in the same skein and activating the same critique against all of them.

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[34] Ibid., see chapters 8 and 3 respectively. The quoted phrase occurs in chapter 3, p. 57.

Besides, I have all through taken the liberty of supplementing McDowell's epistemological narrative with a semantic construal with conscious deliberation to find the routes of friendship and tension between him and Wittgenstein.

2.1 *McDowell's Refutation of Non-conceptualism: Working towards the Conceptualist Option*

Let us start with McDowell's presentation of the same philosophical anxieties that we worked with in the last section, viz., the tension between cause and reason or that between the relations of triggering off and justification. The non-conceptualists, for whom cognition ultimately rests on non-conceptual intuitions or sensations, face a patent dilemma which McDowell lays out as follows. Thinking in general, i.e., judgement or belief, would not be worth its name if it were not answerable to the world, i.e., the relation between mind and world is normative. A minimal empiricism has to be admitted—experience must act as a tribunal, mediating between the world and our ways of thinking, to make the latter answerable to the former. But if we conceive this experience as made purely of non-conceptual impressions, then that cannot be a justifier of cognition, enabling a normative relation with the latter. The space of reason cannot be designed to extend beyond the space of concepts by incorporating the non-conceptual elements into itself. Any attempt to synthesise the latter into the network of concepts would turn it into a concept itself. McDowell charges Gareth Evans with holding on to this horn of the dilemma: Evans mistakenly supposes that experience though extra-conceptual has rational relations to empirical thinking. On the other hand, if this non-conceptual experience is placed outside the conceptual structure of cognition, it (the experience) would act simply as a starter, shooting off the conceptual operations and not entering into the body of the concepts in any manner. The freedom or autonomy which is in general attributed to concepts with respect to their operations of selection, abstraction and generalisation

of particulars, would lose its sense; conceptual exercise would virtually turn into a free spinning wheel rotating in a vacuum. McDowell charges Davidson with lapsing into this mistake of taking experience as empirically insignificant and only *causally* relevant to empirical thinking, rendering the latter as spinning freely in a vacuum insulated in a neat coherentism.[35]

To rephrase the dilemma in terms of reference and description: Grammar or norms of representation would lose all its significance of autonomy or spontaneity unless there was an external constraint in the shape of a referent. If this referent claims to be in a normative relation with the descriptional structure, then it cannot itself be non-descriptional or non-conceptual. The other option, as we have seen, is to deem these non-descriptional referents as being outside the configurational structure of description—i.e., as external causes sparking off the grammatical paradigms of description. In that case, the latter would break loose from the referents and thus lose their sense of all autonomy and freedom, because their autonomy can meaningfully be conceived only as autonomy *of* describing the referents. To put the two options more plainly, if something is a referent, it cannot be non-descriptional, and if it is non-descriptional it cannot be a referent.

McDowell goes on to argue that the given can justify or warrant the use of a concept if and only if the concept does not outstrip the given, i.e., if being warranted by the given constitutes the very identity of the concept. In parallel, we can say that the description can be founded on reference if and only if the description does not outstrip the referent, if its being grounded on the referent makes the description what it is. It is this complete congruence between intuition and concept, reference and description that McDowell wishes to achieve, where neither the receptivity and passivity of intuition and referent on the one hand, nor the spontaneity and autonomy of concepts or descriptions on the other, are permitted to spill

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[35] McDowell, *Mind and World*, Lecture III, section 6.

over each other.[36] He thinks this is the only option for escaping the dilemma looming before the non-conceptualist, and works his way towards this desired climax through the entire course of the book, taking Wittgenstein along in his stride. We shall however try to show that while Wittgenstein concords with McDowell to a large extent, he would never digest the idea of a concept being what it is, or the possibility of its being defined by a unique normative relation with the so-called given, once for all. For Wittgenstein, there are many ways in which our concepts can claim a normative relation with the world; there are many grammatical paradigms through which they can describe the world—in fine, there are many ways of coalescing the receptivity of reference and the autonomy of descriptional or conceptual paradigms.

Confining ourselves to the positive details of McDowell's exposition at present will help us accentuate the mutual distance between the two philosophers progressively through finely layered phases. McDowell emphatically asserts: '[R]eceptivity does not make an even notionally separable contribution to the cooperation' (i.e., cooperation between receptivity and spontaneity).[37] In other words, McDowell suggests that if we carefully remove every vestige of givenness from the given, it would ensure that the entire character of receptivity is exhausted by conceptual cooperation. The so-called intuition or experiential intake is not a bare reception, but that which is already invested with conceptual content. One should not envisage a situation where a bare given rests outside a conceptual hierarchy, and the concepts at the lowest rung sitting closest to the non-conceptual reality take the first conceptual move away from the given, passing the material on to the higher stages of reason. To be captivated by such pictures is to fall into the infamous scheme–content dichotomy critiqued by Davidson. The problem with this dichotomy roughly boils down to this: if the content is to

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[36] Ibid., Lecture I.

[37] Ibid., p. 9.

be schematised, it must have a justificatory relation with the concept, which means it is already schematised, and if its relation to the schema is non-justificatory or causal, then it would not be a schematisable content at all. Thus, McDowell floats a new concept of 'givenness', already infused with a conceptual content. When we navigate through the conceptual or justificatory paths down to experience, the last step in our journey does not take us to a sphere outside concepts, '[b]ut it takes us to something in which sensibility—receptivity—is operative …'. One should not say that we exercise our conceptual principles on the given, but rather that '[o]ne's conceptual capacities have already been brought into play, in the content's being available to one, before one has any choice in the matter.'[38] Thus it is by balancing his previous claim of a concept being exhaustively defined in its justificatory relation with the given, with the novel notion of givenness as being exhausted in concepts, that McDowell seeks to achieve an immaculate blend between intuition and concepts—and perhaps we can say, between reference and description. Now, McDowell qualifies his previous claim to add that if the warranting power of experience exhausts the identity of a concept, then this collapse of receptivity and spontaneity would turn the talk of spontaneity into mere wordplay. So the view that he now finally recommends is: experience is passive, but it draws into operation spontaneous capacities.[39]

McDowell goes on to explain the characteristic marks of experience as imbibing the principles of autonomous conceptual operations. First, while what one experiences is largely not under our control, we can exercise the option of taking the experience as veridical or not. This is true not only with, say, Muller-Lyer illusion, but also with secondary qualities like colour, shape and pain. I have the freedom to exercise the option whether the colour I see is really red or not, or whether the pain that I feel is really due to an external physical cause. There might be

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[38] Ibid., p. 10.
[39] Ibid., p. 13.

cases where the subject, thoroughly programmed to expect a strong pain stimulus, actually misconceives a pleasure stimulus to be pain. Such examples motivate us to support McDowell's claim even with apparently incorrigible experiences like pain (or 'seeming' experiences in general). That is, even with experiences like pain, or experiences like 'this seems to me to be red or to be longer', one can be taught to alternate between different aspects of the experience or to switch between their veridical and non-veridical status. We can also add that even with broad sortal concepts like substance and causality, we have the option to alternate between decisions like what seemed to be a substance is only an attribute, or what was experienced as the cause of another event is actually an effect with respect to that event.

Second, not only empirical judgements, but experience itself is by its very nature not confined to a specific case, but is logically repeatable on other occasions. To have typically passive experience like those of the secondary qualities, viz., colour or shape, means one is able to recognise that colour or shape in another object at a different space and time.

Third, experience is inherently conceptual in so far as it is embedded in judgements, which in their turn are linked in logical or rational relations with other judgements.

Lastly, to speak more generally, experience, even very thickly subjective ones, like an imposing experience of a colour or a sharp stab of pain, must involve a sense of representing reality—'a sensitivity to the kind of states of affairs in the world'. To experience a colour is to relate it with a surface, with the boundary of an object, recognising it in another object—and all these objects are situated in the wider reality. Experience at all levels is conceptual, it has the inbuilt freedom of our taking it or not taking it at its face value—as veridical or non-veridical—by making necessary adjustments in the larger scheme of beliefs, and effecting dynamic recursion of repeatable features in the larger landscape of reality.

Now, while every normal experience is smoothly integrated into the total worldview—the view which becomes progressively

larger—fragmentary and illusory experiences too, like seeing flamboyantly coloured designs with closed eyes or translucent rings moving up and down with the movement of your eyes, too are actively interpreted as *not* fitting into the larger space-time coordinates, or at least to be withheld from being passed into judgements. In this connection, one may come up with apparently recalcitrant instances of a more adventurous nature as cited by Noe.[40] Blind patients or cataract patients, after an optical surgery, report sensations like a chaos of light and shadows, and then the light of the doctor's probe appearing like an atomic explosion against a background of black. One such patient also reported seeing black holes outside, which he understood as windows in houses facing the hospital only a month after the surgery. Now Noe holds that these are mere sensations which remain unconnected with the pervasive pattern of experiences, and they cannot be integrated with the larger scheme of the world. The patient lacks the understanding of the sensori-motor significance of his impressions, he lacks knowledge of the way the stimulation varies with his actual and possible movement. Another patient reported seeing a meaningless blur of movements and colours, and yet another person reported impressions of atomic explosions against a dark background.

Further, Noe also informs us, specially contrived lenses can have remarkably distorting effects on our perception. Kohler is reported to have conducted several experiments with displacing spherical prism spectacles. The subjects of the experiments reported that the most familiar forms dissolved and reintegrated in unexpected ways—parts of different figures ran together with the intervening spaces disappearing, walls slanted down to the roads, and roads began to arch like waves, etc. Now, can these experiences be claimed to have the status of pre-conceptual sensations, typically viewer-centric, non-recursible, and hanging loose from the coherent scheme of our world? If they do, this would obviously go in favour of Raftopoulos's theory, only that they have a more enduring character than the 2.5D objects that

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[40] Noe, *Action in Perception*, p. 5.

endure for only one-thousandth of a second. To handle these apparently non-conceptual upsurges, we again need to appreciate that these so-called sensations too have a describable and recursive character; for the subject knows and is able to describe what it is to have these experiences at a different time and place. Besides, here also the subject has the ability to accept or reject them as veridical or non-veridical. That the subject appreciates them as not fitting with his larger world of familiar patterns—that the blind patient appreciates them as not cohering with his tactual world scheme, that the subject wearing prism glasses detects them as not integrating with her familiar and predictable milieu, or not absorbable with her motor activities—shows that these subjects have, in a way, assimilated these experiences into their larger world of concepts. *The relations of matching and non-matching can hold only between concepts; they cannot obtain between a conceptual and a non-conceptual item.*[41]

In fine, for McDowell, there is nothing like a purely non-conceptual experience, having none of these marks of a concept. He asserts that not only empirical judgement, but experience itself is a combination of receptivity and spontaneity—the external control needed for our thinking cannot be supplied by a non-conceptual given, but our experience itself is a 'receptivity in operation'.[42] Experience is a conceptually structured operation of receptivity which opens out to the structure of reality itself,

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[41] Ibid., chapter I. Noe seeks to demonstrate that perception is basically a form of action, and his point in bringing in these exceptional cases is to prove that since they are not integrated with the sensori-motor skills, they are not perceptions; they are mere sensations which he prefers to categorise as 'perceptual blindness'. While I wholeheartedly agree with Noe regarding the enactive character of perception, I argue that the cases cited by Noe are not pre-conceptual and pre-actional sensations. They are perceptions already integrated into actions in so far as they are understood as not integrated into the larger body of actions. They may very well be accorded the status of a primitive game of reference, which is not distributed over space and time, a variation of a similar game described in *PI* p. 187.

[42] McDowell, *Mind and World*, Lecture II, p. 24.

which actively takes in *how* things are. Our experiences are not passive representations that correspond to reality, but active operations that match reality and are active justifiers or warrantors of judgements.

2.2 *Non-conceptualism inter alia Private Language*

McDowell invents a brilliant track to collapse the theory of non-conceptual experience and that of private language into one, and thus also to synthesise their respective critiques into a single operation. He points out that the demand for the bare presence or the non-conceptual ground of conceptual operation is virtually the demand for an external friction for our concepts, but ironically this demand takes the non-conceptualists to something internal. The crux of Wittgenstein's attack on the Augustinian model, as already noted, consists in the insight that a sign cannot take us to the signified through any of the foundational mechanisms, like universals, outer ostension, verbal rules, etc., for none of these has the required self-interpretive character—i.e., they call for an endless array of interpretations of interpretations of interpretations. There is no way that the Augustinians (who as object designation theorists are also upholders of the 'given') could claim that our interpretation or conception is ultimately linked to the given in a privileged manner so that it gets exhausted by the latter. What Wittgenstein demonstrated, on the contrary, was that the putative given always eludes the concept; there are different ways of thinking or interpreting that emerge in an intractable manner. To close these ever-opening gaps between concepts and their cherished given, the Augustinians took to their last resort of an inner ostension, i.e., pointing to a mental image, or entertaining a silent speech or act of intention. These were projected as concepts of a special status that figure as the last link in the chain, so that it was exhaustively determined and warranted by the given, not left with the slightest space or autonomy to churn up different modes of interpretation. In other words, the given, in order to retain its patently non-conceptual

or unmediated character, cannot afford to leave any gap between itself and these special concepts with which it is glued in a special way. These concepts are also claimed to be special in the sense that in so far as they are exhausted by the given or the bare presence, they have no recursible character (characteristic of standard concepts) that can possibly integrate the given with other objects in a broader and general scheme of reality in public space-time coordinates. Being determined by the bare momentary presence, they are accessible only to the individual having that exclusive experience. This is how these concepts attain the status of 'private' concepts expressible by words of private language. The way reality is given can be transparent to one subject, and thus only a private concept can close the gap between the given and its interpretation or conception. We can add that this private concept, being non-recursible, turns out to be a case of private reference, or perhaps a language where description and reference, concept and intuition, merge into one.[43]

Wittgenstein's critique of this private language can conveniently be formulated in terms of the following strands. First, the real point of Wittgenstein's attack on private language is not to concede that our judgements on cognition, emotion, volition are ultimately grounded on bare presences that cannot be cashed out in terms of language and concepts. Had it been so, the private language upholder might have happily embraced this

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[43] Incidentally, Putnam, in 'Brains and Behaviour', seems to uphold the case of private reference as contrasted to private sense in the course of arguing in favour of a possible version of dualism against the theory of behaviourism. He concedes that while the dualistic claim that the intension of 'pain' is a certain quality, which 'I know only from my own case', is wrong (because the descriptions have to be taken from public vocabulary); this is not to refute dualism. The dualists can still claim that while I cannot possibly know the *intension* of 'pain' from my own case, I experience the private *referent* of the word. See Hilary Putnam, 'Brains and Behaviour', in J. Heal (ed.), *Philosophy of Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

option and smugly transformed his claim of private language into a claim of ineffable experiences unavailable to either reference or conception. Later Wittgenstein's philosophy does not accommodate even a pre-linguistic zone of private mental states, a point often not recognised by many commentators.

Often some versions of private language theory do not claim any inherently non-recursive character of their private concepts, and seek to make them available to private recursion knowable only by the single individual. That is, the subject is capable of abstracting a recurrable essence of her experience by means of inner ostension (be it a mental image, silent speech or state of intention) which she can go on to deploy whenever she has the same kind of experience, a recognition which cannot however be made available to others. Wittgenstein has elaborate and multi-phased arguments against this proposition that there can be a private language that operates with concepts in a standard way, as public languages do, and this may be said to constitute the second strand of his critique.

The third strand of his critique is designed against the non-conceptual brand of private language, where private concepts operate in a non-conceptual manner, figuring only as referents. This itself may work in two directions. The first is to break the identification of the private concepts with the given, to strip them of their self-interpretive status. The second strategy is to show that the proposed private language cannot gain any mileage from these pre-interpretive data, even if they are assumed to exist. For this brand of private language would consist only of names or referrers that would be mechanically caused by the private data to capture their referents (i.e., those data themselves) in a pre-conscious, non-recursive and non-recognitional manner. Obviously, Raftopoulos's theory of reference falls within this category, and it is within this strand of Wittgenstein's critique that the theories of non-conceptualism and private language merge as his common target.

The critique of private language in all these three directions can be condensed into a neat dilemma. If this purportedly private

language is given the status of a conceptually recursive language, it would be public. On the other hand, if it is claimed to be non-conceptually or causally recursive, it would not secure the required normative or justificatory relation between experience and judgements. In the first case it would not be private, and in the second case it would not be a language.

Let us browse through the main arguments in the second and third strands of the critique. As is well known, both memory recognition of private mental states and the conceptual recursion of private expressions are demonstrated to be impossible due to the purportedly non-spatial (or purely temporal) character of these states that are claimed to constitute the subject-matter of private language. My present sensation which I claim to baptise with the private name 'xy' and all its subsequent memory-representations are *ex hypothesi* confined in the one-dimensional temporal axis that moves only forward. In other words, the memory of xy cannot move back to relate itself with the original; the memory of the memory of xy too cannot go back to relate with the first memory, and so on (*PI 358–60*). The situation is obviously not like one in which I am empirically confined to moving only forward and so cannot go back to check whether I correctly remember the object that I left behind. The gap is not epistemological but logical; it is like a one-dimensional worm moving forward through a tunnel, invested with a single sense of touch, incapable of moving laterally or backward, up or down, or imbibing any depth in its extensionless points of contact with the tunnel. Now since it cannot experience space, it cannot also experience the motion of its own body, and cannot represent its tactual sensations in time as 'Now this', 'Now this'. There is no sense of 'now' without a sense of 'then', and there will be no sense of 'this' without a sense of 'that'. In fine, the one-dimensional status of the subject-matter of private language rules out the possibility of its conceptual recursion.

We have seen how mental images and sub-vocal speech too fail to retain a self-interpretive character, any more than the objects of physical ostension. Our experience cannot be dissected

into momentary bits, bereft of spatial structure, qualitative dimensions or a grammatical category. The Augustinians do not appreciate the fact that like the physical picture, a mental picture too can be read in many different ways. It cannot by itself get hooked on to its unique meaning, the unique colour sensation as opposed to shape sensation, sensation of the exact hue as opposed to light and shade effect, the *intensity* of a touch sensation as opposed to its *protensity* or *local signs*, its *duration* as opposed to all of these factors. The further ambiguities whether 'tove' is the name of *this* sensation, or of a general *type* of colour sensation, cannot also be dissolved by the mental image. With a private speaker employing a private grammar, such difficulties reproduce in multiple directions. In the first place, private sortals like 'duration/protensity/local signs of this sensation' will *ex hypothesi* have to refer not to a *public* spatio-temporal framework but to a *private* space-time outline of the sensations. Even if this is granted, the semantic indeterminacies of such private closures would soon rupture into public uses. One can argue in a vein similar to those used against the public ostensions to colour, shape, length etc.: Even for the lone private user, is there only one way to take his private sortals? Will 'the protensity of this sensation of pain' be taken as how the central point of the sensation sprawls out with decreasing intensity into a greater expanse, or as the degree to which it submerges the weaker sensations of, say, itching in the adjoining areas? The private grammar of 'duration' is also amenable to similar ruptures. Further, will the intensity of colour sensations be taken as the comparative degree of brightness of pigments of the same size—say among blobs of paint—one red and the other white, of which the former is more intense? Or will it be the impression of the cumulative effect of the intensity of several blobs of white overwhelming the intensity of a single red blob? Can intensity of colour not be taken as the two-dimensional and purified expanse, say of the blue sky at a high altitude?

McDowell argues that at least one of the main points of the private language argument is that a bare presence cannot supply

a justificatory input into a conceptual repertoire from outside it: it does not secure the essential relation between concepts and spontaneity. The externality of the bare given robs concepts of their abstractive operations, their freedom of recursion. There is no philosophical significance in the insistence that the operation is still spontaneous though all the content one can ascribe to the concept is totally constrained by its specificity. 'Calling something to which spontaneity does not extend "a concept", and calling the linkage "rational", is fraudulent labeling: in effect, labeling a mere exculpation a justification, in the vain hope that that could make it to be one.'[44] To put McDowell's point more explicitly, it is inconsistent to hold private ostension as both an abstraction from the manifold and also lacking in recursibility. If something is abstracted from the manifold, it has to break forth the manifold and recur in other contexts.

Thus, McDowell observes that extracting a concept from the non-conceptual given and then putting it into a conceptual or non-conceptual recursion is virtually the thesis of private concept or private language. This makes the critique of private language tantamount to, and not merely a particular application of, the critique of the non-conceptual given as justifying concepts.[45]

McDowell however takes care to explain that though the inner experiences are conceptual through and through, yet their mode of integration is significantly different from that of outer experiences. It is not that the conceptual principles are not drawn into operation in the case of inner experiences, or that they are not spontaneously absorbed into the larger world. The subject must understand his pain or his colour impression as secured from an unusual angle, only in so far as it is subsumable

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[44] McDowell, *Mind and World*, p. 20.

[45] This was incidentally the view endorsed by Locke, who stated that words in their primary signification stand for mental images, which though private are the roots from which intersubjective exchange takes off. This is again the claim that the bare given that falls outside can yet forge a justificatory link with concepts. In other words, public sense starts off private reference.

under a general type of a state of affairs. To conceive the peculiarity of one's own experience of colour or pain is also to appreciate what it is for someone else to have the same kind of pain or colour impression *if* he is placed in the same angle. The subject understands the specific structure of inner sense precisely because he does not only conceive it in terms of an exclusively first-person angle, but conceives the very same circumstance as thinkable by others, or by herself at different times. The first-person ascription of pain does not make sense without the possibility of recursion—recursion of what it is to be I, what it is to have a sensation, what it is for the body to be placed in different positions in the same space-time coordinates. It is the specifically space-time-bound character of the private that is generalised or conceptualised, emancipated from the specific context and rendered repeatable and recursible on different occasions. This is what is done when one says something like 'My visual experience represents something as being of *that* shade', or 'I know how tall I am' by putting her hand on the top of her head to prove it (*PI* 279). What we have here is a genuinely recognisable feature, a genuine operation of our conceptual capacity—the very same capacity to embrace a colour in mind can in principle persist beyond the specific duration and location of the experience itself. However, as McDowell points out, it is significant to note that the associated capacity to repeat it may be very short-lived; that is, the past and future through which the thought travels may be the very recent past and the immediate future.[46] But what is at play is a *recognitional* and *conceptual* capacity (though short-lived) and not the weird causal or non-conceptual passage of the features of the sense-data or proto-objects as in Russell's and Raftopoulos's schemes of thought. The content of the recognitional capacity is conceptual, and can be made explicit with the help of a sample that is guaranteed to be available at the time of experience at which the capacity sets in. But even if the sample does not recur in the future, the

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[46] McDowell, *Mind and World*, Lecture III, section 5.

capacity or the logical possibility of the recognition persists in thought based on memory. And it may be added that even to say 'This experience is uniquely particular,' 'This red that I see now is non-repeatable,' 'This experience has no feature that can be exploited in a concept,' or 'It is exhausted in this moment' is virtually to betray the general features exploitable in a conceptual capacity.

To dissolve the non-conceptual use of concepts into conceptual ones, to rupture the causal grounding into a justificatory foundation, amounts to a way of rupturing the private language into public, or rather, rupturing the insular temporality of the private into an open expanse of uses. But what cannot be done is to start with private reference and go on building chains of conceptual negotiations on its basis. McDowell quotes Wittgenstein as saying derogatively: '(Or perhaps rather: it *refers* to something known only by him)' (*PI* 273; 274, 243–44 are also relevant in this context). This explicitly shows that for Wittgenstein reference cannot be kept apart from description or conception and yet be made to perform a justificatory role. This supposed joint between private reference and public sense is actually a confusion between justification and causation—the latter McDowell terms as 'exculpation'.

We have seen that the main point of Wittgenstein's critique of private language is to challenge the self-interpretivity of what may be called the objects of inner sense—i.e., to challenge their specially 'given' status that exhausts the concept, leaving no gap between itself and the conceptual operations. It is this special status that was claimed to put the non-conceptual given into a justificatory relation with the concepts. Wittgenstein challenges this claim by playing up the opaque or non-given character of the objects of inner sense, in playing up the gap between the purportedly given and concepts, dispersing givenness into non-givenness, or rather, disrupting the ossified reference into an expanse of uses.

The entire content of this section might be summarised in a way that would give us a smooth entry point into the next

section. The theory of the non-conceptualist ground of concepts, which is also a version of the Augustinian model, claims that the relation between language and reality is mediated by the 'given'—the non-conceptual objects of the inner sense. But once Wittgenstein shows these mediators as opaque, or as being endlessly mediated or dissipated into further uses, they lose their special status as self-interpretive or unmediated mediators. As a result, the mediator collapses into the mediated and the non-conceptual reduces to the conceptual, and the inner sense boils down to the outer sense.[47] But with this collapse of the non-conceptual into the conceptual, McDowell has to show that this conceptual realm of inner sense has a built-in receptivity, rather than spinning freely in a vacuum. McDowell thinks that to prevent the judgements of inner sense from lapsing into a non-conceptual given that would yet claim to justify the conceptual, they need to be kept on the same footing as the judgements of outer sense. That is, the judgements of inner sense should not be given the status of descriptive judgements that can claim to report a special inner realm of ontology. At the same time, McDowell expresses his worry that the judgements of inner sense are in some ways unmistakably different from those of the outer sense—they do not necessitate anything corresponding to them, they are about themselves.[48] *Perhaps similar considerations led Wittgenstein to accord the so-called judgements of inner sense a special status—they are not descriptive statements, but paradigms for describing the objects of outer sense, the means of describing them in a special language-game—the referring game of privacy*.

2.3 *Wittgenstein's Referring Game of Privacy*

Wittgenstein specifically undertakes the programme of refuting all possible remnants of private language—viz., the private reference that may spill beyond private sense (*PI* 243ff.). Let

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[47] Ibid., pp. 21–22.

[48] Ibid.

us remind ourselves of the specific point that Wittgenstein has already made against the putative sanctity and primordiality of reference as opposed to the secondary and derivative character of descriptions. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the referring game for Wittgenstein is a preparatory or rudimentary step like putting pieces on the board, bringing blocks at the call of the builder, pointing to the relevant objects in response to the teacher's instructions in a language learning situation, uttering specific sounds at being shown different colour-images, and so on. Such referring activities may well turn out to be descriptions in another game where a suitably simpler activity will crop up as the required referring game to forge another pattern of simple–complex interplay. The blocks, game pieces, and colour samples do not have a pre-linguistic and pre-given status, waiting out there to be picked out by names.

As already noted in the previous chapter, naming is a means of representation, a paradigm of description in a particular context. The standard metre stick in Paris, in so far as it is made the paradigm of measurement, makes certain ascriptions of measures to other bodies meaningful (true/false), while to say that it is itself one metre long is in a way not a meaningful move within the same game. A mannequin dressed up in a sari is a model for commodification of the sari; it is itself beyond commodification in that particular discourse. Similarly the building blocks brought and placed at the site makes a particular way of construction valid, while blasting them into granules and then using them as the basic building materials is not a valid step in this particular method of construction. Thus the statements 'This rod is beyond the dimension of length,' 'These slabs are the primary building blocks,' are grammatical propositions which render certain descriptions meaningful and others meaningless. However, hereby the metre rod, the building slabs, the mannequin do not achieve a mystically primordial status.

The talk of privacy too boils down to the referring game of conjuring up the preparatory backdrop, a means of representation or a paradigm of description. 'Sensations are

private' is to be appreciated as a grammatical proposition—a standard for according meaning to certain moves in contrast to others (*PI* 247). This paradigm is forged by passivating the object to the sole perspective of the subject, blocking all its expansions and orientations from other points of view. As Wittgenstein illustrates, the difference between the public and the private depends on two kinds of attention—one can paint a theatre scene to show how it would normally look to a multitude of people in the auditorium, or we can paint it to focus on a particular orientation with respect to the painter (*PI* 280).[49] One can speak of a red object, as to how it strikes with its glowing effulgence from all perspectives; or one can highlight a particular colour scheme or a particular tone or hue (*PI* 277), or use an allegorical picture of a red membrane coming out of the object and one's body immersed in it (*PI* 276, 277). It is the last two modes of employment that constitute the necessity of the proposition 'This red sensation of mine is private.' Similarly one can *activate* a pinprick or a burning sensation by subjecting different subjects to exactly the same stimulus on the same part of their body. We can apologetically take gory depictions like the one in the film *Raziya Sultan*, where the protagonist (played by Hema Malini) and her lover Jamal Uddin Yakut (played by Dharmendra), mounted on the same horse, were pierced in their chests by the same flying spear that locked their bodies together; or say the popular antics of Phantom—the comic strip hero created by Lee Falk—like bashing the heads of two 'baddies' together. The point of activating sensations is to loosen them out of their seeming enclosure in the body of a particular perceiver and distribute them as shareable items among more than one perceiver. However, we tend to fall in with the more attractive alternative of 'passivating' or 'privatising' our sensations, where

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[49] Obviously for Wittgenstein, attention of whatever kind is an active exercise which absorbs a broad purview of life and cannot be demarcated into neurological categories like spatial attention and object-attention falling into definite slots of milliseconds as it does in Raftopoulos's scheme.

all we actually do is to highlight a particular quality of the object or our sense organ or the intermediating atmosphere, or play up an unusual perspective. One can privatise a sound sensation by turning it into something hazy and confused with the aid of fluid content inserted in the eardrums, one can deliberately concentrate on getting disintegrated representations of objects through refracted rays, or capitalise on fragmented images of the full chunk of an object by viewing it through narrow horizontal slits on an opaque surface.

Two important points are to be noted in this connection. These alternative modes of exercising one's attention—of enclosing an object within a particular boundary and thus privatising it, *or* distributing it in possible recursions across different viewpoints—both are ways of *acting*. They are not passive representations with a special neurological or psychological identity that push actions outside their exclusive ontology, reducing them to merely external and contingent accompaniments. They do not correspond respectively to Raftopoulos's stages of early and late vision with specific neurological characteristics and millisecond slots that define their ontology. Rather, these fine-grained microscopic analyses and the extremely rich narrative of neurological events gain their invaluable significance only if they are absorbed holistically into a wide network of actions. Secondly, as Wittgenstein points out, none of these moves of passivating objects is essential, nor are they entailed by the other standard kind of operation. Publicity of perception does not entail a necessary transition to privacy.

The purported necessity of the proposition 'Sensations are private' stands on par with the necessity of so-called analytic propositions like 'Every rod has length,' 'Every body has extension,' and 'Everything is identical with itself' or 'p = p'. While on the one hand all so-called analytic propositions (particularly the ones we have just cited) are typically useless, they are yet 'connected with a certain play of the imagination. It is as if in imagination we put a thing into its own shape and saw that it fitted.' Thus the identity-statement may also

be expressed as 'Everything fits into itself,' or 'Everything fits into its own shape,' where 'at the same time we look at a thing and imagine that there was a blank left for it, and now it fits into it exactly.' We also use it in such situations where there was already a socket, and a thing of that shape is fitted into it. We may further use it in yet another situation, like 'Every coloured patch fits exactly into its surrounding' (*PI* 216). In fine, the imaginative play associated with these propositions is one of impressing the spatial exclusivity and impenetrability of each object. Similar treatment applies to all necessary statements (comprising mathematical as well as non-mathematical ones), i.e., to statements like 'All bachelors are unmarried' as well as '2 + 2 = 4'.

Wittgenstein juxtaposes two customary approaches to necessary statements and invites us to appreciate them as standing on equal footing: on the one hand there is Plato's conception of essential properties as ingredients of a thing, on the other hand there are our imageries of arithmetical number and geometrical shapes as fine drawings or fine frames on which a concrete group of objects, or a thing with a concrete shape, are stretched (*RFM* I 71, 72). He argues that the novelty and necessity of mathematical cognition consists in leading one experience to a new one and letting the new experience revert back to the old—like leading the rays of light coming from different sources to fall into a pattern, only to revert back to the original rays (*RFM* III 42, cited and discussed at various places earlier). Overall, we can claim that the circularity, novelty and necessity of the so-called necessary propositions consist in carving out a physiognomic cycle of experiences—a thing coming out of its spatial outline and merging back into it. To this we now add the all-important insight: *The peculiar inexorability of propositions like 'My sensations are private' also consists in this strategy—in conjuring up an exclusive and impenetrable space for each object and covering up the triviality of this operation by an imagery of dispersal and reversal.* While the triviality of the proposition 'London is impenetrable because

it contains nobody but inhabitants of London' lies naked, that of our privacy games with sensations is camouflaged, or better, renovated, by a play of imagination. What do we do when we say: 'This red sensation is exclusively mine,' 'Nobody else can share this pain caused by this pin insertion in my finger,' 'My image of this tree is my unique possession'? Drawing from Wittgenstein's observations with respect to the public games of necessity, we can attempt a more detailed narration. As already mentioned, in the first case we are held under the sway of the red membrane coming out of the object, submerging my body and settling back into it. The pin delinked from all its operations and interactions from other bodies in other directions is attenuated to a single, uni-dimensional penetration in my finger, thus effecting a cyclic interlocking between the two. Similar narrations can be construed with the third example as well. Generally speaking, just as the white light is dispersed and reversed to forge an aspectual-transitional cycle, an object with its many-sided operations and directions is tapered down to a specific spatial enclosure, giving it a new criterion of identity. The game of privacy lies primarily in formulating grammatical propositions in this way—propositions that set paradigms for describing sensations and feelings as 'private' and trees, chairs, sticks and stones as 'public'.

Wittgenstein's resistance to sensations as being pre-conceptual referents is reflected in scattered comments where they are seen to merge with descriptions and actions in a seamless complex. When we think of the sensation of shuddering, the words 'It makes me shiver' are themselves such a shuddering reaction. '[I]f I hear and feel them as I utter them, this belongs among the rest of those sensations.' There is not a pre-lingual shuddering that is the ground of the verbal one (*PI* p. 174). Again, when our kinaesthetic sensations are claimed to advise us about the movement or position of our limbs, we cannot isolate or label a single sensation preceding our knowledge or description. When I let my index finger make a slight pendulum movement of small amplitude, I hardly feel it, only perhaps

a slight tension at the fingertips and none at the joints. The traditional empiricists as well as Helmholtz[50] would no doubt insist on a pre-linguistic chunk of sensation as the unconscious ground of my description or inference. For Raftopoulos perhaps there would be flat, tactual fragments filling out as full-fledged objects through the non-conceptual working of concepts and unconscious memory. They would all be saying something like this: 'But after all, you must feel it, otherwise you wouldn't know (without looking) how your finger was moving' (*PI* p. 185). And that feeling would be in the subliminal zone of viewer-centric and phenomenal consciousness, whose content gets exhausted in the present, and yet figures as the non-conceptual ground of my later descriptions. But Wittgenstein would say that in this case, knowing the movement and position of our limbs is just being able to describe, and the kinaesthetic sensations are not the basis of but integrated into the entire description (*PI* p. 185). Similar remarks would apply to situations where on hearing a sound, I am able to tell the direction, for it affects one ear more strongly than the other, and yet I do not feel this in my ears (*PI* p. 185).

Wittgenstein further speaks of certain situations where the sensation of pain advises us of the movement or position of the limbs or of the nature of the injury. Suppose one has just regained consciousness and does not know whether his arms are stretched out—he finds out only by a piercing pain in his elbow. Empiricists like Helmholtz would treat the pain in the elbow as an isolated ground for inferring its position, and for Raftopoulos perhaps the pain comes at the early phase of touch, while pinning down the exact point of its origin; demarcating its boundary and other details emerge at the later conceptual phase.

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[50] Hermann von Helmholtz, 'The Recent Progress in the Theory of Vision', in Richard P. Warren and Roslyn M. Warren (eds), *Helmholtz on Perception: Its Physiology and Development* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1968). This work is cited by Stromberg, 'Wittgenstein and the Nativism-Empirism Controversy'. I have relied on Stromberg's paper for constructing Helmholtz's theory.

But for Wittgenstein, the pain and the position of the arms are two *aspects* of the same feeling of pain. The yellowish hue of the photograph is not a ground for inferring how old it is, but the oldness is rather seen as an aspect of its yellow colour and vice versa. Just as it makes sense to instruct one (say in a music lesson) to hear this bar under two aspects—e.g., in a particular key, or as an introduction—it also makes sense to instruct one to feel pain under two alternating aspects, say the exact location of the injury, *and* the extent to which other sensations (like itching, or a gentle touch of breeze on that area) are submerged by the pain (*PI* pp. 185, 186). This is exactly what we noted with respect to visual perception as well in the previous section—the so-called pre-conceptual sensation and the full object are two facets of the same activity. One can take the voluntary exercise of visual perception—say of laying it out as a cinematographic alternation—the whole tree recoiling into flat patches of colour only to swell out again into the full-grown figure in the next moment.

Thus, sensations can be said to be grounds of description, inference and activities, in so far as it is already integrated into this complex. The need to demarcate between a pre-lingual, non-relational and non-aspectual block of sensation on the one hand, and language, description or inferential knowledge on the other, is rather the search for a grammatical distinction—the distinction between 'This' and 'so' in sentences like 'This feels so,' 'This looks so,' 'This tastes so,' and so on (*PI* p. 185). Here the article 'this' is just a grammatical expedient and not a so-called pure demonstrative pinning down a bare referent.

One is apt to misconceive the act of private reference as describing a state of mind with a definite duration, unless we remind ourselves that such descriptions are not to be looked upon as static word-pictures hung on the wall like portraits (*PI* 290). But word-pictures should be looked upon as models of description which set off further uses, like a machine drawing sets off specific procedures of its employment. The statements on the privacy of sensations or statements that are descriptions of

sensations are not descriptions of facts, but dynamic models of describing facts; they are cinematographic pictures of dispersal and reversal of depths and surfaces. Unless we appreciate the underlying mechanism of the game of referring, this game would be as naïve as the act of casting a sidelong glance at an object whose existence and special meaning are ensured only by you (*PI* 274). And then statements like 'I know only from my own case what pain is' turn into an exclamation or rhetoric or an allegorical painting like souls fleeing from space (*PI* 293).

Naming a so-called private sensation cannot be achieved through a single solitary act; it presupposes a fair amount of stage setting. Privileging one's sensation as a paradigm of certainty, using specific imageries as a contrastive play with second- and third-person cases, projecting it as a means of representation and description, the stance of abstracting sensations from their bodily framework—these are themselves forms of life, and an extensive participation in these practices is needed before any act of private baptism can take off. The substratum of this experience—i.e., experiencing light in the aspect of its seven constituent colours—is 'the mastery of a technique' (*PI* p. 208). 'It is only if someone *can do*, has learnt, is master of, such-and-such, that it makes sense to say he has had *this* experience' (*PI* p. 209).

2.4 *McDowell on Merging Receptivity and Spontaneity of Concepts in Action*

McDowell had already apprehended a problem in Lecture IV, which can be briefly stated as follows. Our conceptual capacities, being spontaneous, cannot be phrased in terms of natural laws, while on the other hand, our faculty of sensitivity is natural. So our intuitions do seem to be blind, bereft of any concepts. If sensing or being acted on by the world is natural, then the *sui generis* spontaneity of concepts falls outside the realm of nature. We have also seen that the gist of McDowell's response consists in the statement that it is wrong to frame the situation

in terms of such a dichotomy. He says that the way our nature (sensibility) embeds reason or concepts itself becomes our second nature, though these natural conceptual exercises cannot be formulated in terms of laws. At the same time, in our conceptual operations we do not have to step outside our natural kingdom and become non-natural.[51] (Here again we note how McDowell differs from Raftopoulos, for whom the way the computational operations are hardwired into our system is certainly available to nomological formulation.[52])

Now, McDowell ingeniously tracks this dichotomy in the sphere of actions too: if the capacity to move one's arms falls in the realm of our receptive nature, then the *sui generis* spontaneity involved in the will-power to move the arm too falls outside. And this leads him to follow up Kant's famous aphorism in terms of actions and intention: like thoughts without content, intentions without overt activity are empty; like intuitions without concepts, movements of limbs without concepts are merely blind happenings, not expressions of agency.[53] The physiological events of muscles, nerves and neurons involved in actions cannot belong exclusively to a different compartment—the natural world where we are totally receptive. And the spontaneous operation of volitions cannot be merely temporal antecedents added to these dead and blind movements of nature from without. We have seen McDowell insisting on the actualisation of our natural powers of seeing, hearing and tasting, that is, the active exercises of our sense organs, as embedding the spontaneous faculty of concepts. Our primal nature in pulling out our tongue, sticking out our eyes and ears, has no notionally separate sensuousness or receptivity that spills over our spontaneous conceptual faculty. Similarly, actualisation of the natural powers—like moving our limbs, turning our

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[51] McDowell, *Mind and World*, p. 88.

[52] Raftopoulos, 'The Cognitive Impenetrability of Perception and Theory Ladenness'.

[53] McDowell, *Mind and World*, p. 89.

heads—embeds the conceptual faculty of our intention. When we try to create a split between the going up of the arm and the intention to raise it, we end up identifying the latter as a purely mental antecedent of the inner world, causally producing the physical and natural happening in the external world. These latter events—these actualisations of natural powers—are then conceived as mere happenings, divorced of the spontaneous faculty of intention. They are said to be on the same footing as other events, like blood clotting, eruptions or cell division in our bodies, except that they (i.e., the movements of our limbs) are effects of spontaneous interior operations whereas the latter are not. This defence is coupled with the emphatic insistence that the mental causal antecedents lie totally external to the effect, so the essential spontaneity of the antecedent cannot in any way enliven the inherent passivity of the effect. Thus a cleavage is created between the natural powers whereby we activate our bodies, our limbs and our sense organs on the one hand, and the power of agency that resides inside us, so to speak. Our powers of moving our sense organ and motor organ turn out to have no agency; they are alien powers on which we direct our power of intentional agency from a distance. This cleavage has the obviously unhealthy effect: just as the withdrawal of our spontaneity from sensibility jeopardises the very empirical content of our perception, similarly if we withdraw spontaneity from the exercise of the natural powers in action, we distort the very nature of action or agency. Thus, in fine, McDowell thinks that our rationality is imbued in our animality, and our rationality is natural in the sense of being our second nature.

It is extremely important to note that meshing the rich world of physiological happenings, i.e., the formidably complex events of our neurons, nerves and muscles, with the apparently simple and flat movements of the limbs into one indissoluble whole is not the intellectual luxury of armchair philosophy at the expense of denigrating the colossal theoretical and practical labour of psychologists and neurologists. This holistic absorption, i.e., understanding human action as immaculately

conceptual or intentional, and not merely caused by a raw and primal nature that we share with animals, is vital for carving out the ontological identity of the action and passing legal and moral judgements.[54]

3. McDowell and Wittgenstein: Their Proximity and Distance

Obviously, both McDowell and Wittgenstein move in appreciably similar tracks in their steadfast resistance towards a non-conceptual antecedent as somehow being the referential foundation of perception or a purely mental intention as justifying the subsequent action, despite the latter being simply a blind and brutal happening of nature that falls sharply out of the former. Let us follow McDowell's preferred treatment of select passages that he uses to demonstrate his commonality with the basic Wittgensteinian line of thought. In fact, McDowell draws in both Hegel and Wittgenstein in favour of his conceptualism or the internal relation between language and reality—as both claiming that I am not different from my other. While Hegel expresses this in his insight that 'I am free in my thinking,' for Wittgenstein, 'When we say, and *mean*, that such-and-such is the case, we—and our meaning—do not stop anywhere short of the fact …' (*PI* 95). Wittgenstein says that we are sometimes led into thinking that proposition is a queer thing, in so far as being so different from reality, it can yet connect with the latter. So Frege placed sense or thought (proposition) as a transparent and self-interpretive entity in between the propositional sign and the external event (*PI* 94), or attempted to purify or sublimate the signs themselves. But as we know, for Wittgenstein the relation between the propositional sign and reality is just seeing the signs

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[54] In the 'brutal' action of a gang rape, the men are not undergoing a non-conceptual perturbation of hormones that they identically share with animals; rather, they are actualising their sensual nature in a way that is very much conceptual, and non-natural in the sense of being non-nomological.

in two aspects—alternately as internal and external, transiting from a relatively unfamiliar to a familiar set of symbols. For Wittgenstein, to say that a proposition does not stop anywhere short of a fact is a truism. Putting two things in an aspectual interlock is a truism—and this truism can be put in a very interesting way: thought can be of what it is not. In *PI* 429 he says: 'The agreement, the harmony, of thought and reality consists in this: if I say falsely that something is *red*, then, for all that, it isn't *red*. And when I want to explain the word "red" to someone, in the sentence "That is not red", I do it by pointing to something red.' That is to say, in thought we chart out matching states of affairs by charting out what it does not match with. When we measure a thing by laying a ruler against it, we must remember that the ruler does not have an independent feeler to mark out the boundary of the object by itself; rather, in the process of putting the ruler against the object, *we* mark out the beginning and end points by setting it in exclusion from what lies outside its boundaries. Measurement is possible only because we put the measure and the measurable object in the aspect of one another; it is *we* who lay out reality as a framework of positive and negative options in its internal and grammatical relation to thought (*PI* 429–30, also discussed in the previous chapter in section 1.12). Had thought and reality been separate, to be connected in their spatial correspondence, the former could not have charted out what it is not. In *PI* 429, Wittgenstein points out that this is why thought does not strike us as a mysterious medium when we are thinking, but only when we look at it retrospectively. Once we make the split, we are caught up with the mutual dissimilarity of their respective properties and marvel at how such a correlation becomes possible. Wittgenstein speaks in the same vein with regard to consciousness, supposed to represent or duplicate reality in the dualistic model.

Both McDowell and Wittgenstein share significantly similar modes of resistance to the patent non-conceptualist contention that reality has a thicker and richer content than our conceptual resources can capture and discriminate. Thus, to Evans's insistence

that our colour-experiences are more finely detailed than our coarse-grained conceptual intake, McDowell responds that what Evans can at most mean is that while our colour-words and colour-phrases (for both the so-called primary colours like 'red' and 'green' and intermediate shades like 'burnt sienna') express concepts of *bands* in the spectrum, colour-experiences present properties that correspond to something more like *lines* on the spectrum with no discernible width. So our colour-experiences and colour-concepts *do* match, our concepts are *as* fine-grained as our colour-experiences; for in the very attempt to identify the colour-experiences overflowing the bounds of our concepts, we have actually absorbed the putatively non-conceptual into the folds of our concepts. We may use words and phrases like 'this shade', 'that unnamed colour tone', this subliminal tinge', etc.; provided we are careful to note that these words do not capture a private non-conceptual content, but either play up the unique but recurrable specificity of the shade (discussed in section 2.2) or convert it into a paradigmatic model of reference (noted in section 2.3). McDowell concedes that colour-experiences are minimally removed from passivity, requiring the least exercise of active integration of the experience into the larger world scheme. That the principles of spontaneity are operative from the last link does not become obvious until we deliberately undertake a second-order contemplation of these apparently passive experiences. But McDowell takes care to remind us that in this way, we do not avail ourselves of 'inner' experiences or even an orderly sequence thereof, simply because we cannot make sense of the inner without the outer. We cannot procure a recursion of private sense that remains logically unavailable to public space-time coordinates. If we try the thinnest possible integration of colour-experiences into the wider world, by dividing our experience into milliseconds, adding them up in a causal principle of progression, this would not procure us the outer experience. McDowell says explicitly that experience takes in more than merely phenomenological qualities; the so-called non-conceptual content cannot be procured in reference, unless

we are self-critical of the process by which we *comprehend*, not simply *suffer*, the world as impinging on our senses.[55] His position on the status of pointing or ostension too is quite clear—pointing itself can be an act of justification which does not break out from the realm of the conceptual into the realm of the non-conceptual.[56]

McDowell emphatically asserts that any doctrine of 'rampant platonism', where reason breaks loose from any justificatory control of nature and spins freely only on a causal triggering off, is avoided in Wittgenstein's philosophy with extreme care and caution. Wittgenstein steadfastly evades this spooky autonomy of reason in the shape of the putative linguistic facts supposedly described by our semantic and logical rules underlying our uses. McDowell quotes Wittgenstein's observations against such 'superlative facts' or facts of logical mechanism claimed to 'determine the steps in advance' (*PI* 192, 190). Now, McDowell argues that many commentators (like Kripke and Crispin Wright[57]) have not appreciated this vital theme of Wittgenstein's thoughts and have distorted it in the wrong direction. The origin and trajectory of this erroneous reading as conceived by McDowell may be explained as follows.

Traditional philosophy labours under some false dichotomies—mind and body, subject and object, substance and quality, meaning and reference, norm and nature (to which we can add will and action)—and modern interventions seek to close these schisms only by inventing further schisms. Broadly speaking, their attempt to dissolve these schisms consists in accepting the existing ones basically as they are, but

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[55] McDowell, *Mind and World*, Lecture II.

[56] Ibid., Lecture II, section 7.

[57] Ibid., Lecture V, pp. 92 and 93, footnotes 7 and 8, where McDowell refers to Saul Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982); Crispin Wright, 'Critical Notice of Colin McGinn's *Wittgenstein on Meaning*', *Mind*, vol. 98 (1989), pp. 289–305; and Crispin Wright, *Wittgenstein on the Foundations of Mathematics* (London: Duckworth, 1980).

by reconstructing them with a different stance. They recast the gulf with two banks on either side; on the further end they put the destination-object or nature, exactly as was conceived by different versions of their targets (i.e., the different versions of dualism), and then they place themselves on the other side of the gulf, trying to cash out the destination-object in terms of something as close as possible, to make the gulf disappear. But McDowell observes that this strategy is bound to be a reductionist or a revisionist one—i.e., a persuasive technique of closing the target-object into their own construction.[58] McDowell thinks that this is exactly what the phenomenalists did in their attempt to reduce the world into an array of sensory appearances, thereby making themselves vulnerable at every juncture to the imposing challenge of an irreducible reality demanding infinite routes of fresh constructions. So the attempted reduction or revision of the target-object, reference or nature faces a dilemma: (*a*) if it claims to be non-circular, it has to be incomplete, for the pressures of that overwhelming reality persist at every stage of the proposed construction; and this irreducible independence of an external reality ultimately concedes to the concepts an occult freedom moving in a void; (*b*) if it claims to be a complete construction, it has to presuppose the target-object on the other side of the bridge prior to the construction.

Let us see how McDowell shows Kripke and Wright as committing the same error of reading Wittgenstein in a way that projects him as operating with the same dilemma. They hear Wittgenstein as saying: as there is no ground underneath our language usage, no basis of our reason operation and interpretation—in our outer or inner ostension or verbal rules—so what this meaning or interpretation is based on is simply majority ratification, or the fact of the community concurring that things are thus and so. In other words, Wittgenstein exposes a yawning gap between language and reality, meaning and reference, norm and nature, and then seeks to close it up by

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[58] Ibid., Lecture V, p. 94.

community ratification (just as the phenomenalists exposed a gap between reality and perception and sought to close it with a detailed array of sense-impressions). And this reading pushes Wittgenstein into the dilemmatic enclosure: on the one hand, he has to project nature as unreachable, resting on the other side of the gulf, and seek to bridge the gulf non-circularly with social practices, agreement and forms of life. To ensure that the operation of bridging is non-circular, i.e., that the community uses do not presuppose the nature or the reference under the guise of explaining it, these uses have to be accorded a queerly autonomous nature, hovering in a vacuum, closed in an insular coherentism. On the other hand, if Wittgenstein is to achieve a real contact between meaning and reference, norm and nature, then ironically he has to engulf the latter into the conceptual circle, losing out on its independent non-conceptual nature. McDowell says that Kripke and Wright take Wittgenstein as adopting the first alternative—where frictionless movement of concepts turns out to be as totally divorced from nature and becomes non-human. McDowell emphatically asserts that Wittgenstein's autonomy of concepts and grammar is not inhuman: there are no genuine norms, no abstract rules of grammar or sortals, than the specific norms that we address in our reflective thinking; and this reflection fleshes out in the everyday details of our activity which is not philosophical. There is no need to gear it up with disenchanted nature as the non-conceptualists do.

McDowell seeks to deontologise the concept of upbringing or *Bildung* in his attempt to situate it in the category of the social. He says that our upbringing, or our forms of living in which we actualise our nature, is not externally constrained by a disenchanted nature.[59] McDowell here quotes Wittgenstein's observations on natural history: 'That we eat, walk, mate etc., are part of our natural history,' they are the ways we actualise our sentient and receptive faculty placed in nature; and our

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[59] This seems to be the view of Kripke and Putnam, for whom the actual object causes the reference along the chain of communication, irrespective of any cognition or conception on the part of the user.

talking, questioning, commanding (and to these McDowell would surely add also referring and describing) are also part of our natural history—our second nature. For McDowell, in this way, Wittgenstein ekes out a new way of avoiding the two horns of the dilemma—either the non-justificatory externalism of Sellars, Kripke, Putnam, or the frictionless spinning of coherentism (embraced by Davidson).

Ironically, it is from what McDowell thinks to be the meeting point between himself and Wittgenstein that they start to drift apart from each other. The key factor in McDowell's way of reconciling receptivity with spontaneity is his admission of an *act* of perception as distinct from the *content* of perception, the former ensuring the spontaneity of our concepts and the latter providing the much-needed factor of externality and friction.[60] For McDowell, the crucial reason why the content of the act of perception does not lapse into a mere non-justifying cause is that the form and content are blended in action—a point which the externalists have failed to note. But what I shall argue is that the way McDowell transfers his allegation of the form–content dichotomy from perception to action will not achieve the seamless synthesis to which he aspires: this dichotomy would again push him back to the dilemmas that he himself constructs and rehearses against his opponents. To make my point clear, I shall draw out three options: the first option represented by Russell, Evans and Raftopoulos, the second option upheld by McDowell, and the last option, as I shall argue, endorsed by Wittgenstein himself. Let us try to draw out the differences amongst these three options in a picturesque manner.

For both the first and the second option (non-conceptualists and conceptualists like McDowell), objects are there as distinct lumps in external space, with real paths of similarity and real voids of dissimilarity among them. But, while for the non-conceptualists, our perception in its early phase gets glued to single lumps, and only traverses subsequently through a distribution of space, for McDowell, our perception from the

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[60] McDowell, *Mind and World*, Lecture II, p. 28.

very start traverses along the laid-out paths and avoids the gaps given out there. Our perception has the inherent dynamism of never being confined to the terminal points of space for even a thousandth fraction of a second, and this way of activating our perception is our second nature—our upbringing. And it seems that McDowell accommodates the possibility of animal perception as being statically confined to some terminal points of space, whereas *we* absorb these points as already spreading out in various pre-given paths and shutting out the pre-given voids. *But the point is that while McDowell commendably strives to link the factors of receptivity and spontaneity in the spheres of both perception and action, showing the similarity between these two modes of synthesis, he actually keeps the two syntheses separate—the synthesis in the realm of perception as different from the synthesis in action—for the simple reason that he takes perception and action to be different.* He is perhaps not sensitive to the insight that these two syntheses are actually one—that while intuitions cannot be kept apart from concepts and intention cannot be kept apart from actions, perceptions too cannot be kept apart from actions. McDowell concedes that experiencing the world involves activity, like searching, observing and watching. But while one can decide where to place oneself, at what pitch to tune one's attention, this kind of control has its limits; 'it is not up to one what, having done all that, one will experience.' This minimal content of experience is what McDowell insists upon.[61]

But for Wittgenstein there is no terminal point in space, nor are there any real gaps or voids. It is not because the perceivable objects and our bodies are there in an outer space that we are constrained to lay out our actions in terms of those given trajectories, as McDowell asserts. For Wittgenstein, our perceptions are integrated into our actions in a more radical sense—in that we use bits of sounds as representing objects and not the reverse, what we take to be the *given* and what is a

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[61] Ibid., p. 10, fn.

construction out of that, what is the bridge, what are the two banks on either side, what is the starting point and what is the destination, are all carved out in our actions. It is natural to object that unless the perceivable bodies, perceiving bodies and the intervening conditions were not already present as single units in space, our actions would not have taken off. To say the obvious, our limbs have to be there before they can be moved, our heads have to exist as a precondition of turning them around, our ears, eyes, tongues need to rest beforehand as immaculate units so they can be activated. Wittgenstein cannot possibly say that our sense organs and motor organs are created in and through our actions. Even the contemporary process philosophy that takes sense organs and motor organs, and for that matter the entire organism and perceivable objects as processes, these processes are events; they will never be looked upon as actions in their scheme.

To address these inevitable objections, one needs to develop Wittgenstein's insights about space to the fullest and most provocative extent. To do this, I borrow the philosophical insights of Jones,[62] who presents a wonderful narration of space as conceived by Einstein in his general theory of relativity. Jones follows this up with his own insights as to how Einstein's construction, though attempting a grand synthesis (or rather dissolution) of space, time, inertia and gravity into a seamless whole, yet fails to overcome the remaining cleavage between space as container and space as contained.

To be able to utilise Jones's vision of space in favour of our reading of Wittgenstein, we need to see it (i.e., space) as emerging in progressive contrast with two alternative conceptions. The first is predictably the old and traditional picture of space as an inert and passive container with readymade objects resting smugly in there, and the second is the more adventurously creative construction of Einstein, where space itself undergoes an alternative pattern of condensation and rarefaction, thus

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[62] *Physics as Metaphor*, chapter 5.

enabling our usual perception of distinct objects with intervening space in between. McDowell, at least in his *Mind and the World*, does not take up the ontology of space, or Wittgenstein's suggestions on the issue in *Zettel*. His theory that we enact our receptivity by voluntarily tuning ourselves to the already laid-out structure of space can be successively applied to both these pictures of space as chalked out above. With regard to the second picture, McDowell can comfortably claim to have his synthesis of receptivity and spontaneity, not in trailing the contents of an inert container, but in acting in terms of the alternatively condensed and rarefied structure of space. But according to Jones, even this picture does not overcome the inherent defects of the container–contained structure of the traditional theory of space. Einstein, by equating gravity with inertia, gravitational mass with inertial mass, finally sought to cash out space *in terms of* mass and not as *containing* mass. But as Jones ingeniously points out, to say that space itself is massive in some regions and rarefied in others is virtually to retain the 'locus-located' terminologies in a new guise. If there is nothing but pure space, and not objects contained in it and distanced by empty intervals in between, then the talk of its being tighter and more concentrated *in some regions* as compared to *others* does not make sense. If mass is really dissolved into space, the latter cannot claim to be more massive or more rarefied in *different regions*, without paying the cost of bringing back the container–content idiom. Only when we sever content from container can we cook up different items *in* space and relate them with different spatial predicates. Jones goes on to assert that space is an ultimate all point where mass, space, time and everything else are one and the same, there is no extension and no distinction. All of space is contained in every part; externally articulated space is a myth. With such a space, we cannot have things same and different— we cannot have such celebrated principles of a thing not being able to occupy two spaces at the same time, the principles that the metaphor of traditional space was supposed to rule out. Now, similar remarks apply to all the theoretical endeavours

in the philosophy of language—the schisms between founder and founded, ostender and the ostended, rule and application, meaning and use. The philosophers have traditionally sought to preserve these schisms, to pose the foundation as external to and independent of the founded, and yet have striven for the impossible task of making the foundation entail the founded through a magnetic and magical power. Wittgenstein attempted to collapse the schisms of foundation and the founded, ostender and the ostended, rule and application throughout the entire course of his later philosophy.

Now, should we read Wittgenstein as carrying this on into an exercise of collapsing all points of space with all points, leaving no differentiation, relation and articulation? To come to a responsible conclusion on this issue, let us consider his reflections in *Z* 279—81, where he draws an extremely suggestive analogy between rule-following and space. While the essentialists envisage rules as a straight line already laid down in advance, with the applications faithfully trailing behind the line, Wittgenstein's anti-essentialist approach takes the rule as fleshing out in and through every occasion, telling one what to do with every new application. In this sense, the rule itself creates or carves out a path. The real point of Wittgenstein's analogy between rule-following and paths of space seems to be this: on the essentialist theory, applications of a rule do follow a straight line already laid down by a rule, *unless* historical and socio-cultural specificities divert them from the straight route into a curved path. Similarly, material bodies on account of their own inertial mass customarily follow a straight line *unless* deviated by a gravitational mass. This deviation in the rule applications as well as in the movements of the material bodies strikes an intriguingly similar chord: just as the deviant rules are supposed to have a body independent of the supposedly unique set of applications, similarly the mass of a body exerts influences over other bodies external to it, through the vast intermediary distance of an empty space. Now Einstein showed that it is not *due* to the inertial mass that bodies *would* have followed a straight line,

nor is it *due to* the gravitational mass of a foreign body that they actually deviate from that ideal straight track. He demonstrated that the inertial mass and the gravitational mass were virtually the same: bodies do not traverse through an empty space, ideally through a straight line which accidentally gets curved due to the gravitational mass of an external body; rather, the body takes the straightest route available in an already curved space. Similarly, the deviant rules or ad hoc interpretations do not figure as adjuncts to supplement the essential body of the rule to enable it to entail deviant applications. Rather, as the normal rule is blended with the normal interpretation and applications, so also with the deviant rule and its putatively deviant trailers. It is in this way that the normal and the deviant themselves merge together. Similarly, what looks to be a deviation of a straight line is actually a continuation of straightness, and what looks to be a straight line is not an isolated bit—but it is straightness as a whole, as a continuation of curvature. Straightness and crookedness are internal contrasts; it is possible to say that a line like ∿∿∿ is a bit of a longer line where its deviation from straightness is lost (Z 281).

Following Jones, this analogy of Wittgenstein can be legitimately pushed even beyond the kind of synthesis that Einstein achieves. That is, we can safely say that *for Wittgenstein, all discrete points, paths, voids, straightness and curvatures are blended in an immaculate complex where one cannot forge foundational splits between premise and conclusion, cause and effect, ground and consequence and lastly, reference and description—whether in a normal or a deviant mechanism. Indeed, at Z 731, he clearly speaks against the notion of referring to an absolute spatial location by the word 'here', a comment which adequately substantiates our attempts at constructing his views of reference and description in terms of his resistance to the traditional notion of space.* While Wittgenstein did not offer an explicit or systematic critique of the metaphysical theories on space, he did work with the precise motivations of displacing philosophical myths in many areas. And these include

myths like language and concepts duplicating real contents in space, trailing real paths and avoiding real voids out there, false foundations ossifying into external lumps, claiming to entail unique applications through occult logical power.

Finally, it is against this backdrop that we need to fine-tune the distance between McDowell and Wittgenstein. While for McDowell we voluntarily enact our receptive nature in terms of rarefaction and condensation already laid out *in* space, we can perhaps say that for Wittgenstein we *create* space: it is our actions that break, bend and blend space into a relational pattern of condensation and rarefaction. We have seen that one cannot achieve a referential sanctity of the given by claiming it as given privately, non-recursively, as exhausted in the viewer-centric perspective once for all. While McDowell shows it as essentially distributable in space, Wittgenstein shows that even the so-called identities of highly individualised perceptions do not wear their meanings on their sleeve, but break into an incomplete array of uses. So it is ultimately what we do that decides what we mean by a particular mental image or a sub-vocal speech. And similar remarks apply to the so-called intention of our action—it is only in being enmeshed in a wider network of actions that our intention in doing a particular action gets its identity. It is in this sense that *actions and forms of life are primary in Wittgenstein's philosophy; it is in this sense that it is actions all the way down. Actions, usage, forms of life do not fall back upon pre-actional identities from which actions set off; there are no pre-use usable objects from which use is to start off, no given content which forms of life have to format.*

Reference and Description of Action-Words: Davidson, Wittgenstein and Austin

The note with which we ended the previous chapter—viz., that reference obtains in and through actions and not from any pre-actional foundation—can be carried into an interesting and inevitable route of extension. If the reference and description of noun-words dissipate into actions, so will those of the action-words themselves. The detailed examination of the ontology and semantics of actions and action-words that I take up in this chapter intends to liquidise the purported extensional identity of the action supposedly spread beyond the alternative descriptions. I shall try to demonstrate that this putative extension of action-words comes either in the shape of a primary intention receiving an array of secondary ones, or a basic action where the end–means considerations terminate, or in the form of a brute physical event having a bare spatio-temporal boundary prior to receiving all intensional ascriptions. There will be two principal strategies of invalidating all these options. The first stage is to show that for Wittgenstein, actions are not caused by mental antecedents, but blend with wish, will and the so-called mental antecedents to forge an indissoluble whole, leaving no scope for any of the proposed extensions to take shape. This exercise is carried out in contrast with the action theory of Davidson, who in spite of conscientiously problematising the separation of the mental causal antecedent from the action, goes on to provide a hair-splitting analysis to sustain the split, which Wittgenstein dissolves in the long run.

The second strategy of undoing the extensional base of actions will be to mesh the adverbial modifiers of actions (mainly of the 'excuse' genre like 'intentionally', 'unintentionally', 'voluntarily', 'involuntarily', etc.) with the putatively unmodified referent of the verbs themselves. As we know, this second exercise is a programme which is archetypally executed by Austin in his 'A Plea for Excuses'. I propose to read similar strands of thought in Wittgenstein's observations on actions as well as moving to dissipate the dogged remnants of the bare referential identity of the action once and for all.

This chapter will reinforce the following principal insights that appear throughout the course of this work:

(a) Language usages are verbal actions which are not fundamentally different from, rather they are sophisticated extensions of, non-verbal actions.

(b) A verbal description of a non-verbal action is not a duplication but an enrichment of the former, shaping up a means of representation of the former.

(c) This enables a new route to fortify the basic anti-foundationalist insight of Wittgenstein, that the verbal game of referring—say to a table—is a paradigm of representing or describing the array of non-verbal activities with the table. Similarly, the verbal game of referring to an action is not a verbal trail or duplication of the previous non-verbal action, but adds to the body of the latter to recast it into a new identity.

(d) This way of attacking a brute non-descriptional event with a bare spatio-temporal outline, putatively underlying the alternative descriptions, will buttress the crucial claim with which I ended the previous chapter. It is the claim not only of reference and meaning as constituted in and through actions, not leaving reality in an external space-time container intact, but reality itself as shaped in actions. Actions do not happen in space and time falling back on the pre-given objects resting smugly in that container; rather, our actions break, bend and blend space into objects and their interrelations.

This chapter unfolds in four phases. The first phase (comprising the first two sections) takes up Davidson's action theory—to expose his basic foundationalist agenda—which will presently be displaced within a Wittgensteinian framework.[1] The second phase may be said to be an offshoot of the first, where several versions of the causal theory—like William James's proposal of voluntary action as being caused by a characteristic memory-image of the appropriate limb movement, innervation theory, and the attempt theory of O'Shaughnessy—are reviewed and discarded from Wittgenstein's perspective. The third phase opens up a fruitful comparison between Austin and Wittgenstein with regard to their approach to adverbs and adverbial modifiers of actions. They will be found to agree on the point that actions are not neutral events that lie beneath the adverbial modifiers, upon which the latter are added on. Following the main track of this comparative exercise, the final phase extends the tension between actions and modifiers to the notion of freedom and volition to weave the latter with our central and semantic issue of reference and description.

1. Davidson's Theory of Action: A Brief Exposition

From the richly detailed corpus of Davidson's writing on actions,[2] I focus on certain specific topics—his mental causation view of actions, his notion of agency, and his treatment of will or intention. This will also acquaint us with the exact nuances of his treatment of this distinction between reference and description (or between extension and intension), and show how it recurs across the different aspects of his theory.

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[1] A substantial part of section 1 and small portions of section 2 of this chapter have been published previously as an article titled 'Wittgenstein and Davidson on Actions: A Contrastive Analysis', in *Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences: Journal of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study*, vol. 19, nos 1–2 (2012), pp. 91–119.

[2] Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events*.

1.1 *Davidson's Causal Theory of Action*

To say that a person performs an action is also to say that he does it for a reason, and in so far as this reason *causes* his actions, it becomes the primary reason. For Davidson, R is a primary reason why an agent performed the action A under the description d when it satisfies two conditions: (1) R has to consist of a pro-attitude (desires, wantings, urges, aesthetic principles, social conventions) of the agent towards the action with a certain property, and a belief (knowing, perceiving, remembering, etc.) of the agent that A under the description d has the relevant property; (2) This pair of belief and desire has to *cause* the action. (Let us call this couple of statements C1.)[3] Stated more cryptically, this would run as follows: 'For an event e to be an intentional action under a description d, it must be caused by something which was *a* reason for doing e under d.' (We may term this as C2.) Let e be the event of the agent's hands moving over the switch in a way that the latter is pressed down, and let this event be an intentional action under description d (viz., 'driving off a bat')—here the agent must have the required pro-attitude towards the general species of actions having the relevant property (viz., the property of driving away a bat) and also the belief that this particular action falls under that species. Further, as one may have the primary reason and yet refrain from doing the action, Davidson, in order to bridge the gap between the primary reason for an action and the action itself, has to bring in the additional requirement of the former as also *causing* the latter.

This mental causation theory of action is to be appreciated against the rationalist or justificatory account.[4] According to the latter, actions to be actions must be intelligible or describable in

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[3] Ibid., pp. 3–5.

[4] Both A. I. Melden and the later Wittgenstein fall under the broad category of reason theory. This chapter, however, cannot address the internal differences between these two philosophers due to limitations of space.

terms of their reason. Reason amounts to their identification, ruling out the possibility that the reason be posed as preceding and thus as being separate from the action itself. As the cause of an action will necessarily antecede and thus be separate from the action itself, reasons are not causes. Thus, this rationalist account alleges that the causal theorist is making a false split between the action and its primary reason, in so far as he projects the latter as its cause. The crux of Davidson's defence against this position is roughly as follows. Wanting to do an action x is multiply satisfiable and hence cannot logically incorporate the precise way it is to be carried out, nor can it cover the innumerable contingencies that stand in the way of its implementation. As the notions of wanting to do x and doing x are logically independent, the conceptual identity claimed by the reason theory does not hold ground, and the logical gap has to be closed only by actual causation. Davidson would further argue that one can adopt the simple verbal trick of bridging this gap by turning the causal statement into the following analytic statement: 'The pro-attitude and the beliefs which are the causes of doing x in all possible worlds are the causes of doing x.' The artificial triviality of such exercises becomes apparent—in what for Davidson is the obvious fact—that we can very well identify our belief and desire for x without doing x itself.[5]

However, in Essay 4, 'Freedom to Act',[6] Davidson himself works out an inadequacy of C2, and goes on to build his causal theory on stronger grounds. He hits upon innovative examples that betray C2 as merely necessary and not sufficient for explaining the notion of an intentional action. He describes the situation of two mountaineers hanging on a rope in a precarious position, where the action of loosening the rope by the first mountaineer would save his own life at the cost of the second. Here, the event e is the fingers loosening on the rope, the description d is 'getting rid of the weight' that is supposed

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[5] Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events*, Essay 1.

[6] Ibid., p. 79.

to turn the mentioned event into an intentional action A, and the agent, viz., the first mountaineer, evidently has the required pro-attitude and belief about the relevant property of the action, which causes the actual event of loosening the grip and the fatal fall of the second mountaineer. Yet we cannot say that the first mountaineer committed the action of intentionally loosening the rope to let his friend fall. Here Davidson points out that the primary reason of the action is not *the* reason but *a* reason, for the causal chain leading to the fall does not follow a straightforward track. The agent's pro-attitude and belief about the desirable property (of getting rid of the weight) is overpowered by the unnerving fear that his desire may supersede the professional norms and commitment to his friend, and finally it is this fear which actually precipitates the action. Such recalcitrant instances lead Davidson to add that the causation should be in 'the right way', and finally to incorporate the richer notion of intention to supplement his initial formulation. In the real course of life, our pro-attitudes are often intractably entwined with and constantly overpowered by our con-attitudes, which leads Davidson to observe: 'What I despair of spelling out is the way in which attitudes must cause actions if they are to rationalise the action.'[7]

1.2 *Agency and the Distinction between Extension and Intension*

One of Davidson's stock examples of this tension between reference and description with respect to actions is that of flipping a switch. Though extensionally the same as or numerically identical with actions such as driving off a bat, checking the degree of luminance, checking the functionality of the power point, lighting the room, disturbing air molecules, alerting a prowler, etc., not all these descriptions render the action intentional. Davidson claims that while the *criterion* of agency is in the semantic sense intensional or conceptual, the

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[7] Ibid.

expression of agency is extensional or referential.[8] That is to say, the agent comes into a 'direct', or rather what Davidson would call a 'semantically transparent contact' with actual features of the event, whether he actually represents them or not in the course of his action. On the other hand, for a third person to decide whether the agent has acted intentionally or not, the factor of whether he (the agent) knows the real features of the event (which would include the features of the objects involved in the action as well as its consequences) is indispensable. Thus, while the person flipping the switch expresses his agency with respect to all its knowable and unknowable consequences, while the firing of a gun by an agent connects his agency with the unintentional killing of another person, the criteria for describing and interpreting the action, whether in the first person or the third person, are semantically opaque; they fall back on the crucial factor of whether that particular description of the event pertains to the agent's representation and intention.

Davidson further explores whether the notion of agency can be explained in terms of a person bringing about or *causing* an event in a primitive way, or to put it slightly otherwise, in terms of causing a primitive action. Interestingly, Davidson does not design the notion of primitive action against those that are non-primitive. Opposing Arthur Danto's view, Davidson claims that there are no basic or primitive actions that are commonly shared amongst all actions of different levels of complexity, nor can this primitive/non-primitive distinction be drawn with respect to specific actions relative to specific contexts. For Davidson, primitive actions can neither be defined as being immediately caused by brain events or muscle contractions, nor as causing secondary phases or consequences of the action. The agent might be ignorant about the physiological details, but the latter do not cause his actions; rather, in doing the action, the agent also causes them to obtain. Further, Davidson asserts that when I do any action A by doing B (disturb air molecules by flipping

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[8] Ibid., 'Agency'.

the switch, kill the archbishop by checking out the trigger), A and B are the same action numerically or extensionally. It is the same action that can, like an accordion, be squeezed or stretched out in terms of its different aspects and consequences, like the same action of flipping the switch can be squeezed into the bare movements of the arms and fingers, or stretched out to absorb its variant offshoots. So once the rift between primitive actions and the consequences are flattened out, we have to digest that the primitive actions are all the actions there are, for the customary notion of the so-called non-primitive actions as being mental, or rather, more conceptual and cerebral, accommodating various descriptions vis-à-vis the primordial non-descriptional character of the primitive actions, can no longer persist. Being primitive and non-primitive are the two ways in which an action is described.[9]

Though Davidson deliberately seeks to impress this notion of extensional agency as simpler and more basic than that of intention (and intension), he is careful to note that this extensional identity of the action itself cannot be made ready for receiving alternative descriptions (i.e., descriptions pertaining to the conceivable intentions and possible consequences) unless it is clothed in a minimal descriptional load of a primary intention. Indeed, how can the self-same action of moving one's legs in structured intervals in the forward direction, or the minimal act of flipping a switch with one's arms, be identified except under the intention of making perambulatory movements or an intentional manipulation of the switch? In the absence of an intention (i.e., in cases where my body was forced to move in a walking-like movement by some invisible pressure, or my fingers ran over the switch involuntarily), the accordion effect is not applicable. So what makes a primitive action an intentional one, with respect to *some* consequences at least, needs to be answered.

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[9] Ibid., p. 59.

1.3 *Davidson on Intending*

Apart from the demand that we have just noted, there are others reasons for which the notion of intention demands a special place in Davidson's scheme of actions. Davidson certainly does not want his theory of action to glide into some form of behaviourism, either of the Wittgensteinian or of the Rylean variety. He wants his intention to figure as mental foundations of actions—with the further demand that they ground our actions as their *causal* antecedents and not as their *rational* basis, primarily because actions according to him are events that happen in time. At the same time, he does not want to posit his intentions as pure acts of will working mysteriously in a non-deterministic model of causation in the way it is conceived in traditional dualism.[10]

Most vitally, Davidson is concerned with the notion of pure intending that may occur without practical reasoning, action or consequence. He also seems to admit this pure intending as being a detachable identity shared commonly with performed actions—the latter having a certain degree of deliberation and successful execution as an add-on feature.[11]

Davidson is quite sensitive to the fact that most intentions are not formed, if forming an intention involves conscious deliberation and decision. Davidson thinks that the notion of intention that we need as the explanatory basis of action has to be 'broader and more neutral'; it does not have the imposing character of a plunge, and yet despite its slow, subdued and gradual emergence, it is an event, it is an action in so far as it is something that the agent does.

Further, the theory of mental causation of action, even in Davidson's revised formulation phrased in terms of primary reasons causing the action 'in the right way' (discussed in section 1.1 of this chapter), fails to break free of a nagging circularity.[12]

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[10] Ibid., p. 83.

[11] Ibid., p. 89.

[12] Ibid., p. 87, footnote 3.

Obviously, what Davidson implies is that the revised account falls into a dilemma: either it fails to close the gap between primary reasons and the intended action, or it closes it only at the cost of inserting the notion of intentional action into the definition, the very notion that it sets out to define. Besides, this account (of primary reason causing the action in the straightforward or right way) is not adequate to capture the notion of intention, for the purported action is not familiar or observable even to the agent himself.[13] This leads Davidson to enrich the notion of primary reason itself into one of intending in a non-circular way that keeps clear of the notion of action and yet explains the latter.

Davidson goes on to explain the main difficulty in defining the notion of intention (or rather, of *forming* an intention) in terms of belief and desire in the Aristotelian model of practical syllogism. We know that for Aristotle the format of the practical syllogism runs thus:

Any action of mine, which has xyz features (e.g., consumption of sweets), is desirable.
This action of mine has xyz features (is one of taking sweets).
Therefore, this action of taking sweets is desirable.

Aristotle said that the action itself follows as the conclusion of the syllogism.

Davidson rightly points out that on this account there remains an unbridgeable gap between the major premises and the conclusion. On the one hand, the conclusion is an evaluative judgement expressed in terms of a demonstrative reference to a particular action; the major premise, on the other hand, makes a broad sweep over actions only in so far as they are sweet-consuming; it does not have the power to address the specificity of each individual action which, in spite of having the general feature of being sweet-consuming, has variant shades

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[13] Ibid., pp. 89–90.

of desirability and undesirability. It is not till one is acquainted with the particular action demonstratively referred, that he is able even to put up the stance of subsuming the conclusion under the major premise.

Let us take the liberty of projecting this form of practical syllogism as fundamentally different from two other types of theoretical syllogisms. Firstly, in the stock example of the theoretical syllogism, 'All men are mortal, Ram is a man, therefore Ram is mortal,' the particular presented in the subject-term of the minor premise and the conclusion are *possible* particulars, not actual ones. We may add that the referring expressions (proper names, definite descriptions, pronouns and indexicals) occurring in the subject-position of the minor premise and conclusion of theoretical syllogisms are sometimes put to an attributive use, not a referring one.[14] In a second type of theoretical syllogism, however, we can put Ram as an *actual* individual (with whom we are actually acquainted) in the conclusion, and thereby subsume it under the major premise, in so far as the predication of mortality is not subjected to further conditions or viewpoints. But the conclusion of the *practical* reasoning under consideration, though, may be matched with the major premise as hindsight, what remains as the crucial point is that in choosing to perform the relevant action, I went beyond the scope of the major premise; 'my choice represented, or perhaps was, a judgement that the action itself was desirable.'[15] The major premises of a practical syllogism never have a law-like character; there the general predicate of desirability is always qualified by a proviso, what Davidson terms 'prima facie' desirability. All that is warranted by such premises is the

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[14] Since we borrow the distinction between referring use and attributive use of definite description from Strawson, we also need to add that it is in special, second-level contexts like teaching logic, giving examples of syllogisms, or teaching the use of 'therefore' that we can claim the use of the subject-term as attributive. For a clarification of the above distinction, see Strawson, 'On Referring'.

[15] Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events*, p. 97.

conclusion about the particular action as being desirable only under *that* respect.

Davidson goes on to assert that the judgement corresponding to, or perhaps identical with, the action must be an 'all-out unconditional' judgement. The full form of this judgement will run somewhat like this: 'Any action of mine in the immediate future that has the required xy features (consumption of sweets) would be desirable, given the rest of what I believe about the immediate future.' As the exclusion of an endless set of frustrating conditions cannot be incorporated as provisions in the major premise, what is crucial for the all-out judgement is there being an assumption that nothing will come up to make the action (of eating sweets) undesirable or impossible. Obviously this judgement does not incorporate this condition in its own body; rather, this assumption forms the very condition of our intentions. The intention 'assumes, but does not contain a reference to, a certain view of the future'.[16] Davidson further claims that it is this special assumptive nature of the all-out judgement, shared in common between pure intending and enacted intentions, that despite the absence of the demonstrative forges the required connection between the homogenised generality of the major premise and the desirability of the particular and complete action performed by the agent. Overall, it is also hoped that this judgement will ensure the causation of action as obtaining in the non-deviant or 'right' way.

1.4 *Causation and Causal Explanation of Actions*

As we have seen, the principal motivation behind Davidson's causal theory of action is the claim that no amount of cognition, however certain it is, and no extent of desire, however strong it is, is adequate to account for the action, unless the all-important input—that of the primary reason as *causing* the action—is filled in. But Davidson is careful to note the special characteristics of this mental causation—its being holistic, normative, intensional

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[16] Ibid., p. 100.

and non-nomological. Let us briefly explain at least some of these features.

Holism

Contrary to the causal relations that obtain between physical events in an isolated fashion, the causal relations between mental states and actions are holistic. What seems to be a straightforward causal operation between a mental state and a plain physical behaviour actually spills over their purportedly specific boundaries into a holistic mesh of other beliefs and desires. To go back to our old example, where we attribute the intention of illuminating the room on the basis of the seemingly plain behavioural indication of turning on the switch, we just need to reshuffle the environment of the agent's preceding and succeeding behaviour, incorporate more information about the agent's wants and beliefs, to activate alternative intentions like alerting the prowler, driving away a bat, checking the switch, etc.

Let us engage in a more complex and imaginative example. Suppose we attribute to somebody the desire of stealing a painting of Rothko on the basis of what we think to be plain behavioural indications.[17] However, if we take care to place this behaviour in a more pervasive pattern of his life, the same behaviour can be read as a move to save the painting from a foreseen risk of being stolen by another person, or muscular exercises in relation to the picture, or a play with the shadows of both the picture and his body, or rearrangement of objects in the museum or exhibition. Similarly, once we have attributed a desire for stealing, the person's subsequent act of not taking it, even if provided with ample opportunities, does not conclusively warrant the withdrawal of that previously attributed desire. That desire may have been overpowered by another desire of preserving an honest reputation, or been delicately adjusted to an exaggeration of risk factors, etc.

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[17] I have taken this example from Evnine Simon, *Donald Davidson* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), chapter I, pp. 15–16.

> There is no assigning beliefs to a person one by one on the basis of his verbal behaviour, his choices, or other local signs no matter how plain and evident, for we make sense of particular beliefs only as they cohere with other beliefs, with preferences, with intentions, hopes, fears, expectations, and the rest.[18]

Intension, Causality and Causal Explanation

Davidson rephrases his special view of mental causation in terms of a distinction he draws between *events* as *particulars*, i.e., as *referentially transparent* entities, and *actions* as *events described* in one way or another. For Davidson, the mental and the physical are two aspects of the same event, a relation which turns out to be one of 'token identity', independent of any type or property binding the two. Events, being neutral bits of reality, instantiate laws only when described in certain ways and not in others. *Causality* and identity obtain between individual events no matter how they are described. *Causal explanation* on the other hand falls back upon laws, or at least on the specific descriptions that the events receive to the exclusion of other options. Consider the statement 'The explosion on 21st July 1990 in Kolkata caused the collapse of the Howrah Bridge.' If that explosion happens to be the loudest thing on that day, then we can safely substitute the phrase 'the explosion in …' with 'the loudest thing …' without altering the truth-value of the original statement of causality. Evidently this *interchangeability salva veritate* is possible due to the extensional character of causality

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[18] Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events*, p. 221. This holistic theory of causation is quite consonant with Quine's seminal critique of empiricism. Quine claimed that any sensory stimulation can be matched with any sentence provided we make necessary adjustments in the total scheme of beliefs. W. V. O. Quine, 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism', in R. R. Ammerman (ed.), *Classics of Analytic Philosophy* (Bombay: Tata McGraw-Hill, 1960). Similarly, any behaviour can be matched with any intention provided we effect a compensatory reshuffle in the entire pattern of beliefs and desires of the agent.

and identity, whereas causal explanation (whether nomological or not) will obviously be referentially opaque, putting a particular screen of description between our language and the event. So for Davidson, a mental causation does not hold in the sense of physical causation, for while the latter obtains between non-descriptional events, the former *qua* explanation or rationalisation, though non-nomological, relates to actions only in so far as they are described or categorised in terms of specific intentions.[19]

Mental Causation Being Non-nomological

We have already noted that the indeterminate and intractable way in which an action is enmeshed in a web precludes a nomological relation between reason and action. Overall, Davidson views causation as operating in a more relaxed manner, allowing a spectrum of possible degrees of causal explanation. Psycho-physical and psychological relations obtain as generalisations that are distinct from laws. To attribute an agent (the mountaineer or the Rothko coveter) a belief and desire in favour of their action, or another person the desire to crush a snail, is not to engage in a law-like prediction, for the simple reason that such beliefs and desires are invaded by a multitude of other cognitions and emotions. To attribute to an agent such beliefs and desires in favour of an action is to attribute to her a mere tendency to act in a certain way in a contrafactual situation. This analysis relieves mental causation from the threat of counter-examples and the burden of nomological prediction while supplying it with the required freedom or underdetermination that is characteristic of voluntary actions.

1.5 *Davidson on the Logical Form of Action-Sentences*

I share a common philosophical anxiety along with the others regarding the logical form of linguistic expressions. Logical form

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[19] Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events*, Essay 7.

does not bear a pre-semantic status determining the recursion of words in action-sentences to those in non-action-sentences. Davidson does not address this issue in his exercise of analysing the logical form of action-sentences, but instead commits himself to a pre-semantic logical structure that ensures our identification of the philosophical grammar of a particular expression—which in turn holds the key to ontology.[20]

Davidson's programme of extracting the logical form of action-sentences is governed by the following agendas that are temperamentally very different from those of Wittgenstein:

1. Action-sentences should retain a basic extensional identity that can receive alternative descriptions.
2. Actions themselves should retain a minimal self-identical content to which, in most cases, one can add adverbial modifiers—like 'gracefully', 'smartly', 'clumsily', etc.
3. As the intention of an action falls outside the action, the logically analysed action-sentences should not contain expressions like 'intentionally' or 'voluntarily' as adverbs of actions.
4. The logical form should by itself reflect the volitional character of actions.
5. Whenever we say that S ϕed, we mean that S did at least one action that is ϕ.
6. Actions are events and events are individuals, not general properties or universals.

Keeping all these requirements in mind, let us see how Davidson proceeds to analyse the logical form of an action-sentence like 'Rajiv pours coffee in his cup.' Symbolising this in the obvious way as a multiple relation like 'Pours (rajiv, coffee, cup)' or 'Prcp' exhausts the action-word in a unique description and leaves out the other possible descriptions—like, 'displacing the molecules of coffee', 'bringing about an interaction between

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[20] Ibid., Essay 6, pp. 105–6.

the molecules of coffee and those of the cup', 'making a muscular configuration in one's arms', 'sickening a person who has an idiosyncratic intolerance towards the smell of coffee'. Besides, with any action-sentence one can ask about the additional details—how was it poured, with which hand, from which container, in what style, at what time at which place, etc. The logical form of the action-sentence should accommodate these adverbs as add-ons; they cannot be elliptically contained in the original sentence in the form of a multiple relation replete with a definite number of relational placeholders. These considerations along with the other requirements specified above lead Davidson to come up with the following as the correct logical form of this action-sentence:

There exists at least one x such that Rajiv pours coffee in cup x, i.e., ∃x (Prcpx). 'Rajiv flips the switch' will take a form such as ∃x Flips (Rajiv, switch, x). It is only with such intimidating logical forms that Davidson can ensure that the action-word 'x' can accommodate alternative re-descriptions like '(∃x) Displaces (Rajiv, coffee molecules, x)' or '(∃x) Sickens (Rajiv, Sumesh, x)', and so on. Davidson also thinks that with this symbolic form, he can add on other adverbial modifiers, such as 'x was at midnight', 'x was in the dining room', 'x was with right arm held at 30 degree angle', etc. Thus the logical structure would ensure the conjunction of these additional sentences as well as the reverse process of simplification to separate conjuncts. What emerges is that there is at least one event which goes along with Rajiv, coffee, coffee cup, coffee pot, and forges the action of pouring the coffee. Thus, for Davidson, it is this crucial 'x' that holds the key to understanding actions—by preserving both the extensional and the intensional identity of action-words across re-descriptions as well as adverbial additions—'without which a coherent action-theory is not possible'.[21]

Two other things should be noted:

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[21] Ibid., p. 110.

(a) The action-verbs are predicate-constants, hence standing for general properties that are repeatable.
(b) 'x' is an individual variable, not an individual constant, and hence can take on different individual constants as its values.

Thus it seems that though an agent may have the same intention (say pouring the coffee or disturbing coffee molecules on many occasions), or perhaps such intentions can recur in another person's action as well, it is the physical movement that is the effect-event or the action ('x') in the proper Davidsonian sense of the term.—It is these 'x's that are non-repeatable particulars—a different action event generated by the relevant intention at each time.

1.6 *Davidson on Agency*

As a tentative proposal, Davidson recommends Feinberg's accordion model as a reasonable way to understand agency.[22] Just as the same accordion can be stretched or squeezed to a larger or smaller expanse, similarly it is the same agency that stretches beyond the skin of the agent, the boundaries of his body or motor organs, i.e., from his fingers to the flipped switch, from the fingers to the light going on, or to the prowler running off. Extensionally speaking, the agent did all of these by the accordion effect, but obvious he did not do all of these intentionally. Now, though he borrowed the accordion analogy from Feinberg, Davidson uses it in a different sense. Feinberg says that puffing out an action to include its effects or squeezing it down to the confined stretch of physical movements, though apparently these are operations on the *same* event, on closer inspection these are really *two* events. For Feinberg, stretching the accordion and squeezing it down, moving one's fingers and driving off a bat are different. And let us add that the spatial expanse as well as the things involved in the two items in each of these pairs are different from one another, mainly in case of

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[22] Ibid., Essay 3, pp. 53–54.

the second pair. Now on Davidson's reading, Feinberg views each action as broken into several stages or several smaller actions—(*a*) doing something to move the finger; (*b*) moving the fingers to alert the prowler; and so on. Davidson's thread of contention roughly seems to be this: he is against splintering actions into different physical stages, where the former stage is causally instrumental in bringing about the later stages, for such a fragmenting exercise is as absurd as to say that one moves the finger to flip the switch, or the queen pours poison into the king's ear by moving her fingers. He states that mere movements of the body are all the actions that there are, 'the rest is up to nature.' We never do more than move our body—there is no additional action like illuminating the room apart from moving our fingers, the latter cannot be puffed out as the second action caused by itself. This is another way of saying that moving one's finger and flipping the switch are one and the same action. As Davidson further observes:

> If … a person does, as agent, whatever he does intentionally under some description, then, although the *criterion* of agency is, in the semantic sense, intensional, the *expression* of agency is itself purely extensional. The relation that holds between a person and an event, when the event is an action performed by the person, holds regardless of how the terms are described.[23]

And it is this 'x' that is the second term of this unfailing extensional relation with the agent.

1.7 *Davidson on the Individuation of Action Events*

But then, how does this 'x'—this individual action event—preserve its self-identity across all alternative re-descriptions? Presumably as being the self-same physical movement of the agent. But since for Davidson the criterion of identity of any

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[23] Ibid., pp. 46–47.

event is crucially important[24]—the question naturally arises as to the mark for identifying x as the same event of physical movement underlying different descriptions (the different predicate-constants) related with this x. Though Davidson had mostly taken up non-action events for settling this issue,[25] we may hopefully apply his arguments to action events as well. Davidson's style of experimenting with each prospective criterion and discarding it for the next is interesting, because it can substantiate the reasons for our main discomfort with Davidson's theory—viz., that in projecting this extensional identity of actions, he ends up giving it the shape of a bare space-time container. Pending a full exposition of this project in the next chapter, I shall review the main steps in Davidson's investigation in their briefest outlines.[26]

The first proposal of event identity pertains to their involving the same substance—say the same body or limbs of the agent involved in the action of flipping a switch and alerting a prowler. However, as Davidson himself points out, this criterion has an obvious circularity, because often we identify substances by the changes or events they undergo; and it is natural to suggest that Davidson would have no problem in admitting that we identify human bodies and limbs as well by the actions or behaviours in which they participate.

The second proposal for individuating events pertains to their occupying identical stretches of space and time. Davidson himself brings up certain problems with regard to this criterion. Let us see whether these problems can profitably be pushed to serve our own purpose. Firstly, Davidson would correctly point out that the physical body and the motor organs of the agent are a part of the universe, and because the universe is continuous, every change is a change in the entire universe; hence, all changes

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[24] Davidson devotes at least two full essays, viz., Essays 8 and 9, to events and event identification (ibid.).

[25] Ibid., Essay 8.

[26] Ibid., pp. 173–78.

that are simultaneous with the physical movement of flipping the switch would come to occupy the same spatial location and thereby the same identity as the relevant action event. Davidson suggests that to obviate this problem, we have to identify the location of the event at a moment in the smallest part of the substance. In the example we are dealing with, we have to locate the movement of the fingers in the smallest part of the agent's body and thereby decide that the movement involved in flipping the switch is the same as that involved in alerting the prowler.

As for the second part of this criterion, viz., the events consuming identical time, Davidson himself raises the problem of how exactly to compute the time stretches, especially where there is a time gap between the cause and the effect. Following his suggestions, we can give the example of pouring poison in the water jug of a victim, who drinks it after a considerable lapse of time and dies. For Davidson, it is the alternative conventions that we can adopt to describe this event—(*a*) as the remote causal antecedent of the death of the victim; (*b*) in terms of the terminal state, i.e., killing the person; or (*c*) as an expansive stretch that includes both the antecedent and the remote consequent—that would determine different time stretches and thereby determine the recurrent identity of 'x' across alternative descriptions.

Davidson also raises the problem of epistemological lapses in determining the exact space-time location and dimension of events. This may happen, as Davidson illustrates, in identifying the location of seismic events that are distant from the station. Presumably he would be ready to trace the same epistemological gaps in the case of identifying the temporal location and duration of an action event performed by a solitary agent somehow marooned on a distant planet. The standard technological procedures roughly consist in sending signals to the remote event, noting the time taken by the signals to come back to the original power station, and thereby measuring the spatial distance and temporal duration of the relevant event. And Davidson reminds us about the standard lapses that occur in these procedures—mostly pertaining to the signals getting

distorted due to unwanted data intruding in the path and thus incurring different kinds of errors in the exact identification of the event.

Davidson's final criterion for event identity—as having the same causes and the same effects—does not take him any further in individuating action events or non-action events. The reason is quite obvious: unless one has already identified the relevant events, one cannot go on to investigate whether they have the same cause and the same effect. Besides, Davidson has already decided that the same action 'x' may be caused by different mental events, i.e., different intentions, and hence an identity criterion in terms of causes will not serve his philosophical purpose.

For Davidson, the above narrative (presented in the barest outlines) on the interplay between the success and failure of our various identificatory exercises with events does not end with a negative outcome by any means. He thinks that he has successfully tracked the pitfalls in the standard criteria and procedures of identification, and has proposed reasonable solutions to overcome them. If there is any fundamental lacuna in establishing a full-fledged criterion of identity, that pertains not only to events, but to the material objects as well—objects that are patently accepted as smugly resting with their unproblematic boundaries.

2. Davidson and Wittgenstein: Distance beyond Proximity

Davidson's style of philosophising shows a temperament that is fairly sensitive to the overwhelming irregularities and the prodigal variety of worldly phenomena, as well as the intractable difficulties of their detail that make it extremely difficult to contain them within theoretical explanations, to make neat categories of mind and body, or to draw neat quantitative boundaries between different objects and events. Yet his highly observant spirit always strives to bring these anomalies under control, with the steadfast conviction that

beyond this superficial chaos lies the fine-grained world of structured regularity. While he ensures that the T-sentences are interpreted against a holistic background of other T-sentences, Davidson's universal prescription of charity is not sensitive to the Wittgensteinian insights about the inherent indeterminacy of all purported foundations of language—be it inner or outer ostension, beliefs or assumptions, verbal rules or principles. For Wittgenstein, all proposed foundations of our language are ruptured internally, i.e., even *within* a specific holistic network. His way of exploring the anomalous and chaotic extravaganza is not to recoil into foundations or originary sources, not to substitute global foundations with local ones, but to dissipate all supposedly hidden depths to an open expanse of uses and behaviours, to dissolve all explanations into unfounded actions.

2.1 *Working Out Wittgenstein's Critique of Davidson's Mental Causation*

Wittgenstein's resistance against the causal theory of action principally consists in the insight that no state of intention or volition can be segregated from an action, from which the action can be said to follow as an effect. This needs to be appreciated against the backdrop of his reflections on the so-called 'mental concepts' in general. Wittgenstein points out that a study of phenomena like seeing, hearing, thinking, expecting, hoping, believing, willing, etc., invites a question of criteria, viz., what external behaviours one must exhibit to be in that state. In the first place, hopes and expectations cannot be given an insular phenomenological quality of the present—their content spills over to imbibe the precedents and consequents of the situation (*PI* 584). Suppose the entire morning I am hoping that N.N. will come and bring me some money—if one minute is cut off from this context, 'will it not be hope?' The question can be answered sensibly only if we realise that whether we cut off a chunk of one minute or five hours from the stretch, hoping cannot preserve a purely mental status if the words do not belong to the language-game, if the 'feeling' of hope is displaced from

the entire institution of moneylending in which it is situated. Secondly, the diverse cases of hoping, expecting, intending do not share a common, self-identical character in the shape of a special mental undertone that can be retrieved through introspection. To dissipate such myths, Wittgenstein takes to his characteristic style of actual survey of cases where these terms are used (*PI* 588): (i) I am revoking my decision to leave tomorrow. (ii) Your arguments do not convince me, I stick to my previous decision. (iii) Asked how long you are going to stay, I say, 'Tomorrow my holiday ends.' (iv) At the end of a quarrel I say 'O.K. I decide to leave tomorrow.' There is no characteristic experience of 'tending towards something' underlying all these diverse phenomena. Intention to say something does not consist in opening one's mouth, drawing one's breath and letting it out again, for such things can happen in a completely different situation to feed a completely different concept (*PI* 591). On the whole, the dimension of 'depth' in the cases of genuine intentions as contrasted to faked ones consists in a flattening out of this depth in painstaking descriptions of humdrum uses (*PI* 594).

It is interesting to note Davidson's response to similar arguments raised by A. I. Melden against the causal theory of action. Davidson observes that mental causation of actions does not require either 'a stab, a qualm, a prick or a quiver, a mysterious prod of conscience or act of the will',[27] nor a mental event which is common or peculiar to a particular kind of action, say the driver raising his arm with the purpose of signalling.[28] For Davidson, what is required is a mental event at some moment before the action, something that the driver saw before he raised his arm. Besides, Davidson argues that in complicated actions like driving or swimming, it is not a single event but a sequence of activities that bears the stamp of its mental causation: '... there are more or less fixed purposes, standards, desires,

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[27] Ibid., p. 12. Davidson refers to A. I. Melden, *Free Actions* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961).

[28] Ibid., pp. 12–13.

and habits that give direction and form to the entire enterprise, and there is the continuing input of information … in terms of which we regulate and adjust our actions.'[29] Such responses show that Davidson is far from appreciating purported mental phenomena—like the sudden visual observation of the driver, or the standards, purposes and style of continuous reception of inputs—as inextricably entwined with, and not antecedent to, a rich corpus of behaviours (*PI* 242–315).

Further, though Davidson admits verbal uses as a kind of action, he thinks it to be substantially different from non-verbal ones. For Wittgenstein on the other hand, they blend into a single continuum very much in the same way that pain-language becomes a sophisticated extension of pain-behaviour. When a child hurts herself and cries out in pain, we teach her new pain-behaviours—e.g., exclamations like 'oh!' 'ouch', putting her hands on the sore place; and later, pain-languages like 'stubbing one's toes', 'itching', 'toothache', etc. Teaching pain-language is teaching the child a new kind of pain-behaviour, and none of these behaviours (linguistic and non-linguistic) is a label or signboard-indicator for her internal and private pain-sensations. Learning and teaching a new cluster of pain-behaviours (linguistic and non-linguistic) are not the end of the language-game, but rather its beginning. It is the beginning of a process of forming and expanding the concept of pain along the transitional links of family resemblances. Actions for Wittgenstein are not the consequence of language, nor are they passively represented in the same; rather, language in general is an extension of the consensus of actions, of forms of life, in the same manner as pain-language is an extension of pain-behaviour.

This vital distinction between the two philosophers naturally has a far-reaching impact on various aspects of their views on action, particularly with respect to will or intention. We have already noted that both Davidson and Wittgenstein dismissed the dualistic assumption of a special state of will or intention, and treated it as an action that may stop short of generating

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[29] Ibid., p. 13.

further actions as in the case of pure intending. However, while Wittgenstein stretches out all the separate links of belief, desire and action into a seamless complex, Davidson uses his notion of intending as a missing link in his mechanism of explaining actions. The foundationalist commitment of Davidson convinces him of a state of intention that lies beneath the riotous flow of conflicting beliefs and desires, holding the key to all the questions as to why we act as we act, and why we intend as we intend. Now, how would Wittgenstein respond to Davidson's operation of tracking down a subdued assumption of an all-out judgement underlying our intentions? To put it more precisely, how would Wittgenstein react to the way Davidson opens up a gap between the flat generality of the major premise of a practical syllogism and the particularity of the conclusion, only to close it up with the all-out judgement? For Wittgenstein, once an action theory creates a gap in this manner, it refuses to be closed up in the prescribed way. The indeterminacy of the major premise does not simply consist in its glossing over several species or aspects of desirability, and thereby failing to capture the specific aspect of the particular action referred to in the conclusion. For Wittgenstein, each of these species or aspects is internally ruptured, precluding an entailment even when the aspects of desirability are specified in the major premise. For one thing, the semantic indeterminacy of each of the words with which the premises and the conclusion are coined cannot be foreclosed by rules. For another, the proper names or demonstratives in the minor premise do not cut out an immaculate individual—be it an individual man or animal or an event action—either in a conceptual or in a non-conceptual manner. Both individual as well as conceptual identification are in this sense non-foundational and reduce to actions. In other words, the major premises of both theoretical and practical syllogisms, in their predicative content as well their range of individual variables, flesh out bit by bit, through each derivation of a conclusion.[30]

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[30] Wittgenstein lays out the groundlessness of verbal rules in PI 185–242, and also in *RFM* I-1–5, 13.

Davidson asserted that the judgement 'that corresponds to, or is perhaps identical with the action' must be an all-out, unconditional judgement. The verbal expression of such a judgement is 'This action is desirable.'[31] Here, interestingly, Davidson is equating judgement with action, and since he distinguishes the judgement from its verbal form, we may conclude that for Davidson this judgement is a mental action. Now Davidson's way of refuting dualism by forging a relation of token identity between physical and mental events gets bogged down by a neat scaffolding of definite spatio-temporal identities, missing out the significance of their interpenetration. In this sense it is doubtful as to what extent Davidson appreciates that manipulating verbal symbols, or running images sequentially, or combining them with one another, spill out of their supposedly mental content into an indeterminate motley of uses and behaviours. Similarly, what makes an action a typically physical event is not a neatly detachable space-time eventuality, but the way it overflows its prescribed boundaries to what is thought to be exclusively mental—the silent speech, images, feelings, etc. All these Wittgensteinian insights will have their repercussions for the Davidsonian ontology of intention, challenging its pre-verbal or mental status as well as the semantic transparency of its verbal clothing, showing it to be inoperative even *within* a system.[32]

Davidson seems to oscillate between two positions on the nature of intending—on the one hand he appreciates that the all-out judgement 'corresponds to, or perhaps is identical with the action,'[33] while at the same time he characterises the intentional action and intending as two concepts which need to be linked

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[31] Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events*, p. 98.

[32] For Wittgenstein, mental images, isolated from the vast corpus of verbal and non-verbal uses, have no inherent semantic power. His arguments against the popular supposition about mental images are scattered all over his texts, of which we may mention *PI* p. 18, 175–77, and sections 166, 370, 389 of the same text.

[33] Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events*, p. 98.

by the said judgement.[34] And in this connection, his theory of intention may be frustrated by a substantial drawback. If the intention or the all-out judgement is identical with the action, then it cannot *cause* the latter. In that case Davidson has either to abandon his causal theory of action or has to admit that it is the prima facie judgements that cause the all-out ones. Evnine points out an interesting problem pertaining to the possible mechanism of this causation.[35] All prima facie judgements, whether on desirability or undesirability of the action, even if compared and computed as regards their relative weightage, will at most generate another prima facie judgement on desirability and never an all-out judgement. This yawning chasm between the mental cause and the effected action that persists in Davidson's scheme may push it against the intensional character of mental causation that is so vital to his action theory. Causation of an action will lose its essential reference to the *representation* of the desirable/undesirable features and aspects of the action by the agent; it will lapse into a brute relation of mere causality between the unknown physical correlate of desire and belief on the one hand, and physical movement on the other.

Further, Wittgenstein's critique of will exposes its traditional notion as a counterpart of the Fregean sense. In the model of sense catching the reference, the will is conceived as fixing the exact point on which to catch hold of the action. We may venture to suggest that Davidson's all-out judgement figures somewhat as an intermediary sense, with its generality chiselled down to catch hold of the particular action, even when the latter is absent (as in the case of pure intending), along with which the required assumption, viz., that of the absence of all invalidating circumstances, is woven in. Thus it also has an interesting similarity with the Strawsonian mechanism of reference—where the referent is acquired by *presupposing* and not *stating* its unique existence.[36] With Davidson's theory, we find that the reference

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[34] Ibid., p. 101.

[35] Evnine, *Donald Davidson*, chapter 3, p. 57.

[36] Strawson, 'On Referring'.

to a particular action under the required description is achieved by the assumption of its blending with generality, or rather the assumption of the generality thinning down to the individual action with the aid of negating the invalidating circumstances. All theories of meaning or action that invoke an intermediary to connect words with the world or wish with action—viz., sense or intention, respectively—fall into an endless exercise of interpretations of interpretations of interpretations in their vain attempt to justify the putative self-interpretive character of the intermediary. Davidson's theory of action too has a strong tendency to lapse into the same pitfall.

We can use a picturesque analogy given by Wittgenstein to show how the official doctrine of dualism as well as Davidson's treatment of will or intention suffer from the same folly. Both look upon causation on the model of the working of a machine and envisage the failure of the causal nexus of wish, will and action only in one way: as they cannot identify an effective mechanism connecting the parts of the machine, i.e., since they cannot locate the apparatus through which the wish links up to the will or the will links up to the action, they declare the failure of the deterministic causal narrative on that account. For Wittgenstein on the other hand, the causal narrative of the will fails because the causal nexus fails in another way, namely, because the machine parts mesh into each other or because the cogwheels mesh with the objects with which they have to mesh. In a similar fashion, the wish meshes with the will and will with action. This is what Wittgenstein states explicitly when he says that willing, if it is to be distinguished from wishing, cannot stop short of the action itself. Trying, attempting, making an effort are a plethora of activities (*PI* 613–15). While Davidson openly claims that we can know our wishes and desires independent of our action, for Wittgenstein it is the certainty of the statement and action that is the criterion of there being a previous thought (*PI* 633). Feeling is not the criterion for determining actions; rather, the action, the space and the objects are the criteria for determining the feeling (*PI* 625–26). We do not perceive

mechanical motions; we perceive what the agents do *in terms* of their wants and beliefs. Just as we look at a cat when it stalks a bird, or a beast when it wants to escape (*PI* 647), similarly we see the pedestrian step aside to let a vehicle pass, we see a child observing a bird climb onto a chair to get a better view of it.

Wittgenstein further argues that the thought or intention of saying something is like a brief or incomplete note, and action is like following out that brief note. It is not that there are several interpretations of that brief note and I choose one line of interpretation in my action. On a later occasion, I just remember what my action was, I do not remember choosing one alternative among others. It is straightforwardly remembering my intention, what I was going to say. This clearly shows the absurdity of splitting intentions and actions (*PI* 634).

Wittgenstein's observations about intention being like brief (incomplete) notes or a snapshot with incomplete details (*PI* 635–37) can be fruitfully compared with his notion of a rule being like a 'short bit of handrail'. As there *is nothing* beyond the handrail, and there *isn't nothing* beyond the handrail (*RFM* V-45), similarly the incomplete details of the snapshot-like intention is neither irrelevant nor relevant. It is not irrelevant in the sense that a crow crowing in the background of my performing an action is irrelevant; it is not relevant in the sense that the action was encapsulated in that snapshot. Using the statement of one's intention as a way of filling out the background of an action is a regressive exercise, it is not a forward movement from the prior causal antecedent to the subsequent effect. Had Davidson's all-out judgement not been invested with a positive (though revisable) content, and had it not been pulled back one step short of the action, it could have been treated on par with this notion. Wittgenstein emphasises that this incomplete and scanty snapshot cannot by itself account for actions, nor should one try to design a complete story (in the shape of the cause or reason), cast it into a neat boundary and make it stop before the action itself (*PI* 638). One has to take the entire background where wish, opinion, intention and action are blended in an

indissoluble whole. The ontology of action does not involve the temporal split of causality, nor the logical split between wish, will and action in the model of entailment. This continuum should not be conceived in a fashion where several thoughts tie up in a chain, for this would generate further questions as to whether these ties are separate thoughts or feelings too, in the same manner as each link invoked to tie up the word with reality only invokes a further link.[37] Wittgenstein's observations that 'one is unable to show such connexions, perhaps that comes later' (*PI* 639) may be taken as hindsight, provided we do not let it lapse into the model of a logical system. Wittgenstein rounds up his discussion on will with the explicit statement that any proposed foundation—a verbal statement or a non-verbal intention—underdetermines the action (*PI* 641).

2.2 *Action and the Sense/Reference Conundrum: Inter Alia Cause–Reason Polemics*

For Wittgenstein, as we have already noted on several occasions, the special character of a referring game consists not in pinning down pre-descriptional logical atoms, but in starting the rudimentary phase of a discourse, projecting an object with a non-relational, self-complete and independent status, shoving away its internal complexity and interactions with other objects to the periphery. Putting pieces on the board before playing any real moves, a builder calling out the words 'slab', 'pillar', 'block', 'beam', and his assistant bringing the relevant material, a person being trained to utter different noises in response to different colour samples have been cited as illustrations. On the other hand, tracking down the levers in their inextricable modes of connection with other parts of the cabin, delivering the actual moves of the game, absorbing the building blocks in the full-fledged process of construction, distributing the sound labels

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[37] Wittgenstein's critique of ostension (outer and inner), traditionally claimed as foundational links between word and the world, is presented in *PI* 33, 85, 21, 389; also see *BB*, p. 2.

of colour samples in time and space, are the corresponding descriptive games. With regard to actions we can surely conceive the following games (on the analogy of the illustrations given above). The trainer calls out 'Walk'/'Walking', 'Lie'/'Lying', 'Jump'/'Jumping', and the learner responds either by actually performing, or drawing pictures or recalling images of the appropriate action, or even uttering specific noises allotted to different sample pictures of standard actions. The corresponding descriptive games would be exercises of recasting actions in terms of their phases or narrating internal details, taking note of the duration of a particular action, comparing different actions in terms of their respective temporal orders, or in terms of their respective configuration of limbs, and so on.

We have already noted that for Wittgenstein, these games of putting the pieces on the board, the builder's exercise, or uttering a special noise for a specific action sample—in so far as they have no tendency to move to the actual steps of playing, or the intricate stages of construction, or distributing them in space and time—cannot even be called simpler games in any sense. The simplicity of these so-called simple moves can only be appreciated in so far as they do not remain as truncated fragments but are seen as activated into the full-fledged games. To repeat, the way the simple is incorporated into the complex, or reference is incorporated into description, is obviously not through a passive and linear assortment but in a dialectical interplay of an extremely intractable nature.

With this prelude, we can go on to examine how Wittgenstein's view of reference seeks to purge all vestiges of foundation—how it breaks away from all 'isms' in Davidson's holism, how it destabilises all agreements underlying Davidson's indeterminacies, how it seeks to rupture all identities that play the role of either intra-linguistic justifiers or extra-linguistic constraints of actions.

Davidson's notion of the extensional character of a self-same action vis-à-vis the intensional mediation of agency and intention seems to be confusing. Despite refuting Danto's basic

actions (posed as counterparts of logical atoms of language), Davidson seems to be labouring under the faulty assumption of an action being the self-same referent invested with a uniquely basic or primary intention prior to secondary ones. This strange blend of extension and intension—of bare physical movement and its minimal mental cause, a blend that is professedly inadmissible in Davidson's scheme—sneaks into his account at various junctures. This happens in spite of his ingenious tool of removing the intention adverbs used in our ordinary language from the grammatical form of action-sentences improvised by him (see section 1.5 of this chapter). This happens in spite of his brilliant strategy of explaining away the intention phrases invariably embedded in the action-sentences (e.g., in a phrase like 'the intention with which he went to the church …') as syncategoramatic expressions or grammatical devices to formally introduce the sentence.[38] And any claim to a primary intention can easily be refuted by some simple thought experiments. Is walking more primary than making a linear pattern on the ground, testing the density of the soil at regular intervals in the forward movement, feeling the heartbeat when one takes forward steps, preventing oneself from a sequence of falling, testing the comfort quality of one's shoes, etc.? How can Davidson claim that it is *one* action in terms of a primary intention while the variance of descriptions only pertains to alternative aspects or consequences? Andrew Sneddon[39] also observes that Davidson could only dissolve the basic/non-basic distinction at the cost of a prior individuation of actions in terms of primitive and non-primitive. In the same vein, Davidson seems to commit himself to the minimal semantic fact *given* to a radical interpreter—the fact of the alien interpretee uttering phonemes and/or moving her limbs with the intention of making these marks and movements go *beyond* themselves. It is indeed notable that both Wittgenstein

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[38] Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events*, Essay 1, pp. 8, 14.

[39] Andrew Sneddon, 'Does Philosophy of Action Rest on a Mistake?', *Metaphilosophy*, vol. 32, no. 5, October 2001, pp. 502–22; see especially p. 512.

and Davidson desist from the absurd scepticism of dualism—the proposal that we as interpreters of others' actions start with purely mechanical or robotic movements, to which we adjoin beliefs, desires and other mental states. But the crucial difference between these two philosophers begins to emerge as soon as we realise that for Wittgenstein, there cannot be anything like a semantic primitive posing as the starting point of all alternative descriptions, or rather as the neat gateway for entering into the holistic mesh of actions, desires and beliefs. Without this entry point, it makes no sense for Davidson to situate the agent in a *causal* network, for the action as an effect or consequent requires a separate spatio-temporal identity for itself. This separability is also demanded by the principles of radical interpretation which claim that both the speaker and hearer are situated in the same causal and logical network, sharing a common stock of logical and non-logical beliefs connected through universal principles. For Wittgenstein, on the other hand, this putative entry point is already absorbed into the mesh; there is no neat physical movement of the interpretee with a clean starting and end point for the interpreter to lay her hands on.

For Wittgenstein, the polemics about actions being caused by antecedent reasons or being *atemporally* justified, and the further dispute whether an action has an extensional identity over and above its intensional aspects, is not so much an ontological issue; it is rather the difference between two language-games played with respect to action-words. This is an occasion to repeat the crucial point that like all other cases of language usage, causal language-games such as 'collision', 'impact', 'generation', 'action and reaction', 'tit for tat', 'you hit me so I hit back', 'so', 'therefore', etc. do not represent or replicate ontological relations between events; rather, it is our primitive and spontaneous behaviours that thicken out into verbal activities to round off into a more sophisticated texture. While both the causal paradigm and the reason paradigm are designed to link things and events together, they are, as we have already noted, vitally different in so far as the *cause* and the

effect are mutually external, while the *reason* and the *reasoned* are virtually identical, allowing themselves to be read off from one another.[40]

  This insight that the difference between cause and reason is *enacted* in our behaviours should pave the way for appreciating how actions themselves may be framed in two different ways by the causal paradigm and the reason paradigm respectively. The causal paradigm takes up the stance of describing the actual process or mechanism through which an action is generated stage by stage, while the 'reason' account is interested in turning this mechanism into a path, where the process and the result are engulfed in a circular equivalence.[41] To give a simple illustration: A shows a colour sample to B, defines it as 'red', and later orders B to paint a red patch. B's action of painting a red patch exactly like the sample is amenable to two accounts. The causal account would run somewhat as follows: I am shown a colour sample, the word 'red' was pronounced in such and such a tone, after some time when the order to paint red was uttered, the image of 'red' came to my mind (or then I experienced an adrenaline rush), whenever I experience that, I paint a red patch, etc. A reasoned account of this action would be: 'I was ordered to paint a red patch according to this colour sample and so I adopted the colour and shape exactly similar to the sample.'[42] It is important to note that the causal paradigm puts up the stance of an extensionalist narration trailing behind the real process through which the action comes into being, making no effort to invoke any of its features as *represented* or *judged* by the agent as showing him a *way* or a *rule* for performing the relevant

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[40] Wittgenstein's accounts of causation and the distinction between cause and reason are mainly contained in his article 'Cause and Effect: An Intuitive Awareness'; *BB*, p. 15; A. Ambrose (ed.), *Wittgenstein's Lectures: Cambridge 1932–35* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979). Besides, I have relied substantially upon Glock, *A Wittgenstein Dictionary*, pp. 72–76 for his comprehensive account of causation.

[41] See footnote 40.

[42] The above illustration of cause and reason figures in *BB*, p. 15.

action. (Even the introduction of the mental image leaves out the crucial factor of the image being judged as corresponding to the word 'red' given in the ostensive definition as well as in the order, or being seen to be relevantly similar to the colour of the given sample.) Obviously all the gaps in the mechanism—ignorance about some links, forgetting or misdescribing them, a rectification made by a third person—are integral to this causal paradigm of describing actions. On the other hand, since the 'reason' account absorbs the reason into the action itself in a single circle, there remains no possibility of an epistemological gap between the agent and the reason of her action. Further, the distinction between the extensionalist and intensionalist approach to actions is not constrained by an external ontology of events and its internal representations; rather, the purported externality and internality are internal to the language-game.

In the light of the above clarification, we can handle the apparently recalcitrant incidence of epistemological gaps between the agent and the cause of her actions, commonly encountered in our ordinary uses. Indeed, Davidson, in order to fortify his causal theory, claimed that on occasions of conflicting motives one may be wrong about identifying the correct one and thus misdescribe one's actions. Thus, when a person has two reasons for poisoning his friend Charles—either saving his pain or getting him out of the way—he may err about the real reason.[43] Mr X who prefers to spend more time with his beautiful lady friend than with his wife, may describe this action as an effort of sympathetic counselling, while as a matter of fact it is the sense of importance and feminine appreciation he gets from his lady friend that figures as his actual motivation. Now, Wittgenstein would point out that when we talk about the agent's missing, misrepresenting or misdescribing the real cause behind his actions, such claims virtually amount to the misrepresentation or misdescription of his entire pattern of wants, intentions and movements; one cannot have an

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[43] Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events*, p. 18.

epistemological gap with the pure mental antecedents of his actions while retaining the actions themselves as brute physical effects. When an agent oscillates between several options as possible causes of his actions, he is actually oscillating between different actions with different descriptional identities. Often the purported cases of misapprehensions or misdescriptions of real intentions are actually cases of missing the details, inability to fill in the backdrop of the action with rich minutiae, or they amount to recasting the action by shuffling its background and foreground, etc. Thus, the psychoanalytic interventions cannot meaningfully claim to haul up the hidden cause of an action from the subconscious, for the simple reason that the success of analysis is supposed to be shown by the agent agreeing to the detection, a phenomenon that does not tally with the exercise of formulating hypotheses, which is an integral part of the causal account. '[T]he investigation of a reason entails as an essential part one's agreement with it, whereas the investigation of a cause is carried out experimentally.'[44]

Barring certain obvious restrictions (like an action plainly going against the agent's report, his claim being insincere, etc.), the verbal explanation of a non-verbal action is an extension or enrichment of the latter, not a verbal trail of an anteceding event. While one can readily appreciate that an explanation of a verbal utterance is a way of paraphrasing it, it is rather challenging to digest the verbal explanation of a non-verbal action as forging a neat and indissoluble whole with the latter. Schroeder gives the example of A throwing a snowball at B's window two consecutive times in order to get B's attention, where the second act which defines and gels with the first act is actually comparable to the verbal explanation of the first act.[45] The question is not one of explaining a language-game by means of our experience, but of

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[44] Ambrose, *Wittgenstein's Lectures*, p. 40.

[45] Severin Schroeder, 'Are Reasons Causes? A Wittgensteinian Response to Davidson', in Severin Schroeder (ed.), *Wittgenstein and the Contemporary Philosophy of Mind* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 2001), p. 166.

noting a language-game (*PI* 665). Similarly, the psychoanalytic exercise of hauling up hidden motives from the subconscious is virtually to equip oneself (both the analyst and the patient) with a 'means of representing' the action, shaping up its referential identity as a point of departure.[46]

This referential identity, as already noted, is not an isolable datum of a physical movement to serve as the entry point into the mesh of belief, desire or pro-attitudes. And this virtually amounts to saying that the references of action-words flesh out bit by bit through each move of the narrative, through each description of the various facets. This phenomenon of what I call the external and internal rupture of reference may require further explanation. I shall follow Wittgenstein's own illustrations of other expressions—other parts of speech like nouns, adjectives, etc.—to extend the same mode of analysis to action-words. To repeat a simple example: seen from one standpoint, the simple components of a chessboard are each of the 64 squares, while from a different standpoint, its components may be said to be the colours black and white and the schema of squares (*PI* 47). While this external rupture of a mode of reference is unanimously accepted as the standard reading of later Wittgenstein, what is not often appreciated is that *within* each language-game or each mode of reference–description interplay, the reference does not precede, but is stretched out bit by bit through each description. Of course, one may ask, shouldn't each of the 32 black squares and 32 white squares be given as immaculate units before one can undertake their combination? Shouldn't the schema of squares be given as a neat framework before it can start taking in the colours to fill its empty slots? To address the second example first: the identity of the schema, as to what constitutes its outer frame, what constitutes its slots, what constitutes the colour of the frame itself as different from the filling colours, progressively unfolds through each move of filling out the frame. Similarly, what constitutes the boundary line of each

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[46] Ambrose, *Wittgenstein's Lectures*, p. 40

square, what constitutes the exact extent of its third dimension, is only fleshed out through each cut of its being readjusted and reshaped in the process of being combined with other squares. If we appreciate this internal rupture of reference with respect to linguistic actions, we may readily extend this insight to non-linguistic actions as well. To say that it is the same basic intention or description (of making linear movements with one's legs) that receives alternative descriptions, one needs to be careful that this basic description attains its basicness only in relation to its being enriched in each of the alternative modes of configuration or in its thickening out into other descriptions. The basic description (linear movements of the legs) can stretch into the non-basic descriptions (testing the density of the earth, making patterns, etc.) only through being absorbed in the whole at every stage, and not through a passive and linear combination.

Davidson has all along made the mistake of straining out a brute physical event, commonly shared by and independent of all descriptions of the action. What seems to be the single physical event underlying an action of walking can be read as some subtle atmospheric factors constraining one to move her limbs in such and such ways, or as the presence and absence of gravity alternating in succession to generate the walk-like movement. Or it may well be a fragment of a much more expansive event, viz., concerted operations of different persons in different positions, related by electric signals, where each person is receiving remote signals by making matching movements of the body in a seemingly ambulatory structure. Thus, what seemed to be a neat and independent physical event of leg movements is actually an arbitrary bit cut out at random; it does not even cover a phase of the action of a single participant in the entire operation. In both these examples, the so-called common event seemingly served on a platter breaks up into numerically distinct events having different quantitative boundaries. Each time we seek to extract a neutral physical event commonly shared by and prior to all intensional descriptions, that neutral operation of cutting up a bare physical identity turns out to be a fabricated operation

to match the subsequent descriptions. To put it more explicitly, in order to demonstrate the applicability of Davidson's theory of extension versus intension to various actions, we strained ourselves to concoct apparently pre-descriptional or neutral referents like the movement of legs in a forward direction, downward movement of the fingers on the switch, etc.; while what we actually did was to devise a cyclic enclosure between reference and description. The bare physical event and its embellishments were not genuine progressions from simple to complex, but were designed in mutual alliance—the putatively bare reference was thickened out into descriptions, and the latter in their turn reverted to their pre-descriptional counterparts. Following Wittgenstein, we can compare this with the process of fashioning a white beam of light into a cycle of dispersal and reversal (of itself and its seven components) through the mechanism of crossing prisms (*RFM* III 42).

2.3 Reference of Action-Words and the Problem of the Soulless Automaton

Following Putnam, I would like to show that Wittgenstein's style of treating the reference of action-words is better equipped to handle J. Kim's hypothesis of 'soulless automata', than Davidson's scheme of reference that is grafted onto his model of mental causation of actions.[47] The crux of this hypothesis as presented in Kim's *Supervenience and Mind* is that these automata, in exactly the same physical conditions, perfectly duplicate the

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[47] See Hilary Putnam, *The Threefold Cord: Mind, Body and World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 73–91. At p. 199, Putnam refers to Kim's *Supervenience and Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). It must be noted that Putnam was chiefly motivated to show how Wittgenstein's language-games with mental predicates are perfectly competent to handle the recalcitrant talk of a 'soulless automaton', without lapsing into any of the traditional doctrines of interactionism, verificationism or logical behaviourism. I, however, have the specific agenda of negotiating Putnam's account with regard to this semantic issue, viz., the reference of action-words.

behaviours of 'minded' human beings. Kim uses this hypothesis not against Wittgenstein, but specifically against Davidson's anomalous monism. As already noted, for Davidson all events are individuals or spatio-temporal particulars, and all events are governed overall by a causal structure—to make the universe of events intelligible. For Davidson, though every individual mental event is identical with some individual physical event, this identity cannot be subsumed under any psycho-physical law. It is not by any general property, shared either by the physical or the mental events, that the latter become identical with the former. Thus the same kind of mental event becomes identical with a physical event of a completely different kind in its next incidence, and the same kind of physical event, like a neural occurrence, muscular energy or limb movement, can occur the next time without the mental event occurring at all, although it had (accidentally) been identical with that mental event in the previous occurrence. It is this way of keeping mental events free of any property-identity with the physical that Davidson wanted to preserve the freedom of actions. For Davidson, as any mental event m_i is extensionally (contingently) identical with p_i, the effect of m_i, say p_{ii} being physical event is governed by a physico-physical law, but causation by m_i is not governed by psycho-physical laws. Now, Kim insists that on Davidson's view, one can easily replace a mental event m_i by another mental event m_{ii}, m_{iii}, etc., while retaining its contingent identity with p_i and also retaining p_i's nomological generation of p_{ii}. One can even discard any mental event m_i and preserve p_i and its generation of p_{ii}. In other words, according to Kim, in Davidson's anomalous monism, two individual organisms can exhibit the same physical behaviour while having completely different mental states. Furthermore, an organism can have exactly the same brain states and exhibit the same physical behaviours without any mental state whatsoever. Thus, Davidson's anomalous monism leads to the possibility of there being soulless automata, which in the same physical conditions behave exactly like us with the same efficiency, though without any mental events like perception,

attitude or decision. Kim states that Davidson's position would lead him to the conclusion that no mental event can enter into a causal relation with anything else; they would just be epiphenomena.

How would Davidson react to this hypothesis? Putnam reads Davidson as holding that the talk of the mental consists in the talk of rationalising human behaviour in terms of pro-attitudes, beliefs, desire and intention. For Davidson too, the behaviour of the automaton is bound to differ from that of normal persons, in an expanded causal network of behaviours, and it is this larger backdrop of behaviours that gives meaning to the talk of the mental. In that case, Davidson would not be ready to accord meaning to the talk of 'soulless automata behaving exactly as if they have minds'. For him, though explanation of human behaviour is embedded in a mental causation model, the causation is intensional, non-nomological, non-deterministic and holistic. We know that on the one hand, Davidson asserted that mental causation of actions cannot be turned into a game of mechanical causation, intension cannot be turned into extension, description cannot be turned into reference; on the other hand, however, he also suggested that in the confused tension between conflicting motives, we may not know which is the exact cause of our action. For Davidson, particular mental predicates are not identical with particular behavioural predicates; the identification of a particular intention will require an expansive, holistic background. But if the behaviours of two organisms match totally with respect to their holistic background—down to the microphysical details—then if a particular mental predicate is applicable to one, it would also be applicable to the other.[48] The entire task of deciding the mentality of the action—vis-à-vis the soulless simulator—amounts to the task of finding an extra bit (or an extra cluster) of behaviour(s) that coalesces (though

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[48] Putnam (ibid., p. 202, footnote 23) refers to the source of this theory in the paper by Davidson titled 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge', in Dieter Henrich (ed.) *Kant Oder Hegel* (Stuttgart: Kleincotta, 1983).

anomalously) with a mental event in the case of the human and is crucially absent in the simulator. And this task is entrusted to an omniscient interpreter (OI) who can always know all the physical facts about the person and the environment to ensure that the mental predicate does apply to him. And though Putnam does not mention this specifically, Davidson seems to be entertaining the possibility that while the agent might not know the primary reason or the exact cause of his own action, it is available to the OI. In other words, we can go on referring to the neutral event x by our action-words, while all the predicate-constants—like 'walking', 'eating', 'conversing', 'weeping'—may fail to have reference both with respect to the normal human as well as the soulless simulator.

The verificationists and logical behaviourists have a different way of showing Kim's hypothesis to be unintelligible or unacceptable. Their strategy is simple: as the meaning of mentalistic predicates consists in nothing but some verification procedures or characteristic set of behaviours, to say that the soulless automata behave *as if* they have minds but *actually do not* have minds, is virtually to say that they behave *as if* they behave in x, y, z manner, but they *do not*, or they behave in x, y, z manner *and* they do not. The very enunciation of the hypothesis turns out to be either meaningless or contradictory.

We can see that all the parties involved in this debate presuppose our action-words as either having or not having certain neat and exclusive references. Kim entertains the possibility that action-words *could have* referred to purely mental wills or intentions, and then goes on to falsify that possibility with his hypothesis of soulless simulators. As Putnam points out, Kim's hypothesis takes the phenomenon of interactionism as quite intelligible, that there can be automata behaving exactly like normal people (with minds) behave to bring about physical effects (as if) with their mental decisions. Kim then goes on to argue: 'Whenever such an effects seems to follow from mental causes, it is actually from physical causes (automata). So these apparently mentally caused events are actually different

from what we think.' Overall, Putnam thinks Kim nestles comfortably in what he thinks to be intelligible, not realising that interactionism does not have the required intelligibility to make it empirically falsifiable. As for the verificationists and logical behaviourists, they hold characteristic behaviours to be the references of action-words, so that one can neatly equate them in terms of analytic schema. Davidson took the physical event or x to be the reference of action-words, and though, for him, this reference occurs intensionally in a holistic network, it may sometimes deflate to a brute physical movement due to epistemological lapses. In such cases, the intensional reference has to be preserved by the OI.

Putnam points out that the automaton hypothesis rests on the principle of independence, viz., that if the two properties—A properties (physical properties) and B properties (mental properties)—are mutually independent, then it is logically possible that the former should be present without the latter. But to make sense of the mutual independence of any two properties, one should be able to have the laws of mutual reducibility and non-reducibility in place. Any behaviour of the invoked simulator that seems to be normal or voluntary will be doggedly claimed to be merely mechanical or physical, but this irreducibility of the physical to the mental harks back to the assumed reducibility of the mental to the physical—without being grounded on any law in either direction.

Putnam says that Kim's unwarranted assumption of the principle of independence rests on a failure to appreciate the 'speaking-sensitive' nature of semantics.[49] To speak of automata who have no mental properties, and yet behave as if they did in the same physical environment, fails to make sense because it is thrown at us as a discourse of philosophy—of making a thought experiment of stripping persons of all mental properties while retaining the physical ones. Let me add that this particular game-agenda is never explicitly acknowledged. The hypothesis is offered

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[49] Putnam, *The Threefold Cord*, p. 87.

as a claim to a genuine assumption; that the hypothesis itself has a big abyss in itself—that it falls back on the specific theoretical interest—cannot ultimately be propositionalised. Thus, as the hypothesis falls back eternally on unstated conditions, it fails to have the status of a proposition, and precisely because of this lacuna, it fails to have a pre-applicational sense.

Putnam performs this brilliant exercise of highlighting how Wittgenstein himself tackled such talk about 'soulless automata behaving exactly as people with minds do',[50] and how he exposes the vain attempt of such language-games to suppress their specially designed agenda, i.e., to suppress their very game-like character. Wittgenstein projects this as being a language-game used by a despotic state power to use a so-called tribe as slaves on the ruse of their 'soullessness'. Wittgenstein points out that this projection of their soullessness grossly depends on the assumption of their having minds, intentions—talk of which is deliberately suppressed under a contrived design of matching their behaviours among themselves and also with those of the enslavers. But still the enslavers would go on playing the game of denying that there is anything apart from the accidental coherence of the brute external movement of our limbs, a purely coincidental harmony of the phonetic bits erupting from their mouths and from ours. Putnam argues that this example constructed by Wittgenstein clearly shows the unintelligibility of the automaton hypothesis, the lurking contradiction in the principle of independence, the unwarranted assumptions of the very thing that the hypothesis seeks to negate.

Refuting the talk of 'soulless automaton' does not require us to put up a neat and complete synonymy between mental predicates and physical ones, in the style of the verificationists or logical behaviourists. Rather, it is our natural ways of enacting the talk of 'soulless duplicators' (as in the example given by

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[50] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, eds G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. Von Wright, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), vol. 1, 96, discussed in Putnam, *The Threefold Cord*, pp. 89–90.

Wittgenstein) that gives meaning to the construction of the verificationists and the behaviourists. The semantic functions of reference or meaning of our action-words—when it comes to such resistant expressions like 'truth beyond recognition' or 'soulless simulators of soul'—are not determined by the purely mental will of the dualists or externally stipulated procedures of the logical behaviourists. It is our language-games and actions that are primary, so that all rules and reality are absorbed into them.

I think that the insights that we have gathered with respect to the issue of reference and description of action-words (in the previous sections of this chapter) give us better resources to handle the hypothesis of the soulless automaton or the talk of soulless tribes. Ironically, the discourse around Kim's hypothesis starts with a talk of actions that internalise the motives, desires and intentions into a thick stretch of behaviours where the so-called physical and the mental—intentions, desires, neural occurrences, muscular and limb movements—all penetrate into each other in an indissoluble complex. And it is at the cost of this thickly enacted mind that this language-game goes on to the next step: that of externalising actions from their intentions and motives. It does not externalise the mental by recasting mental events as causal antecedents of actions as Davidson did; rather, it externalises the mental predicates from the physical ones by discarding the former altogether. This is what Kim's hypothesis, or the enslavers of the soulless tribe, sought to do. But a dogged insistence that an automaton can perfectly duplicate the physical environments and the behaviours of normal persons is ultimately vacuous, in so far as any attempt to show us any instance to the contrary may be sabotaged by explaining it away as a case of mechanical simulation. One may see the exact organic composition of these so-called automata, exactly the same kind of tissue damage and bleeding, the kinds of behaviours—say those of joy, pain, disgust—coupled with exactly the same kind of physical environment, and yet the hypothesis demands that there are no mental predicates involved. In other words, this

is the strategy to turn the reason game with action-words into causal games, to turn quality into brute quantity, description into reference, intension into extension. It is the game of turning all conceptualised descriptions of behaviours—neutralising all qualities into external walls that mechanically knock against each other to generate a chain of causes and effects. It seeks to turn the closed path of reason that an action-word embodies into a mechanical and gap-ridden process of causation—whereby the actions of the so-called automata, initially conceived as voluntary, are recast into involuntary actions. (We have explained this point in section 2.2 of this chapter in connection with another example of Wittgenstein in *BB*.) Understanding this referentialising move that is involved in turning a reason game with action into a causal game is an effective prelude to understanding what Putnam correctly projects as the language-game character of the soulless tribe or of Kim's hypothesis. It is again the non-foundational character of reference with respect to action-words that is available in Wittgenstein's philosophy and unfortunately unavailable in that of Davidson, that would serve our untutored sense of ethics.

3. Wittgensteinian Critique of Other Mental Causation Theories

Once we are attuned to the principal track of Wittgenstein's critique against the causal-foundational theories of action, we can appreciate the crux of some other versions of this genre as well as identify the areas of their vulnerabilities.

3.1 *Wittgenstein against William James's Theory of Will*

For William James, voluntary action is a movement produced by the memory-image of an experience that is produced by a previous movement of that kind.[51] Voluntary actions usually produce a memory-image of the characteristic movement which is retained

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[51] The materials in this section are substantially derived from Scott, 'Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Action'.

and called up on the occasion when the same kind of action is required. This remembered experience is usually constituted by the kinaesthetic impression (attitude of the limb) and the remote effects of the movement. It is this recalled memory-image that is claimed to produce the required voluntary movement.

Wittgenstein would of course find this theory fraught with a number of difficulties. First, the patent problem of admitting a movement producing a characteristic image in the nerves—an image which is *ex hypothesi* unconscious and yet available for being hauled up on the required occasions. A memory trace can be claimed to be revived only when it is judged to be similar with a present experience. But here both the items of comparison are absent—there is no present experience of the required movement characterising the ensuing voluntary action, and the past experience is *ex hypothesi* absent. The typical predicament of recall as demonstrated by Wittgenstein (and discussed fully in chapter III) can again be served here as an effective refutation of this theory.

Secondly, on James's own admission, since every voluntary action requires an appearance or feeling of the same, ability to perform that action requires, on ultimate analysis, the fact that one had already undergone that experience in the course of an involuntary movement. Here Wittgenstein would object that a voluntary action is uniquely and inextricably embossed on the background of so-called antecedents and consequents; one cannot possibly wrench out a purely physical movement of limbs with strict spatio-temporal identity shared commonly between voluntary actions and involuntary happenings. The demand for a primal involuntary happening as the basis of voluntary actions also seems to stand on par with the demand—in the sphere of semantic theories—of pre-interpretive simples shared in common between all alternative descriptions or configurations. For Wittgenstein, as we have noted, such putative simples or transworld identities get fleshed out through each of the descriptions in factual or counterfactual statements. Further, the demand for a memory-image of the kinaesthetic

sensations defining the type of voluntary movement leads to the same impasse as the Augustinian demand for inner ostension having a self-interpretive character (*PI* 621, and also p. 185). The memory-image of the kinaesthetic sensation, in order to be functional, must be laid out in a sentence phrased in sub-vocal speech that such and such sensations are characteristic of such and such actions, say 'phi'-ing. And we have seen that no such sensation or silent speech severed from the complex plethora of behaviours have any explanatory value.

James further qualifies his position by saying that the only idea that is required for a well-trained action (say brushing teeth) is the idea of the completed action (e.g., the idea of one's teeth being brushed). He further claims that the concepts of the end once consented to, sparks off a chain of reactions quasi-reflexively. This claim thrives on typical conflations between the causal and the conceptual game—the illegitimate combinations of principles of conceptual operation (repeatability, spontaneity, autonomy) with the acclaimed phenomenon of rattling off an unrepresented causal chain in a mechanical manner. James further qualifies that in cases where too many conflicting possibilities are in the mind, some attention or a fiat is required to purge the mind of these conflicting possibilities. The general principle is that we are aware of nothing that intervenes as the contravening circumstance between the conception and the execution of the voluntary action. So here we find a foundational tool, interestingly similar to Davidson's 'all-out unconditional judgement', for it comes in the shape of a fiat, or a presupposition of the absence of the recalcitrant circumstances, and is supposed to ensure that the action generates from an external ground in an unfailing manner.

The more well-known objection, commonly rehearsed by the philosophical community, takes the shape of a dilemma. This kinaesthetic image can either be brought about by the will, or it is a passive or involuntary occurrence. In the first case it leads to infinite regress, in the second case it will have no explanatory

value. In Gilbert Ryle's writings,[52] we find an effective formulation of the first arm of the dilemma which he used against the dualist theory of volition. Incidentally, this dilemmatic objection is frequently deployed by Wittgenstein himself in his discussions of both action and meaning in an interrelated manner. With regard to the issue of meaning the objection runs as follows: if the foundations of language and meaning (ostension, rules, physiological occurrences) are *external* to uses, they can never explain the latter, and if they are to explain uses, they have to merge with the uses themselves.

Similarly at *PI* 617, Wittgenstein argues against defining willing as an experience or a mental bridge to convert a wish into an action. He presents this position very much in tune with the misconceived anxiety about meaning or sense—the anxiety about how to grasp the exact significance or aspect of the meant object unless there is a self-explanatory phenomenon of meaning. The flawed conception of the will also runs along the same track—it insists that unless there is a phenomenon of willing as the precise connecting point (between the wish and the action), one would not know how exactly to act, i.e., where exactly to catch hold of the action. The Will as a mode of pinpointing what exactly we want to do is sought to be secured as an all-out unconditional judgement by Davidson, and as a characteristic memory-image, fiat, or the absence of the contravening intermediaries by James. Wittgenstein here explicitly points out that if we fall into the trap of seeing the will as the feeling that shows the exact point or way to act, the further question inevitably arises as to how one directs such feelings themselves, to which point, and so on ad infinitum.[53]

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[52] Gilbert Ryle, *Concept of Mind* (London: Hutchinson, 1963).

[53] Michael Scott says that nowhere does Wittgenstein present the regress argument against the official theory of will as Ryle does. See Scott, 'Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Action'. However it needs to be pointed out that it is not difficult to construct the regress argument from the general tone of Wittgenstein's analysis—with respect to both the self-interpretive mental image as well as the disambiguating and decisive will.

As Wittgenstein points out at *PI* 611, the traditional notion of will as the 'uncaused cause', as the 'primal source of action' gets its significance in and through internal contrasts. For Wittgenstein, every language use is thrown into a relational network of language-games; it derives its significance through contrastive juxtapositions with other uses. Will cannot be willed, it cannot be brought about as the raising of arms can be brought about. So on the one hand, the use of 'will' is contrasted with the 'raising of arms' in so far as unlike the latter, the will cannot be brought about. Secondly, it is also to be contrasted with 'mere happenings'. To say that 'the will cannot be willed, it comes when it comes' contrasts with cases where we just passively wait for a thing to happen, say when I passively wait for the violent thudding of the heart to stop. Thirdly, the language-game with 'will' has similarities and differences with the games of 'bringing about' and 'not bringing about'. While it cannot be brought about in one sense, in another sense, the will to swim can be brought about by jumping into water. Thus, overall, the talk about will as the 'uncaused cause' of actions or 'the prime mover that cannot be moved' derives its significance, not from a corresponding entity exactly answering to the description, but from the contrastive interplay with other uses.[54]

Scott points out that both Wittgenstein and James agree in rejecting sensation and feeling as the foundation of identifying voluntary actions. But this cannot be posed as a significant proximity among the two philosophers, for Wittgenstein has both factual as well as logical reservations against the explanatory

Against the general demand that the opacity of the physical ostension is overcome by a transparent mental image, Wittgenstein contended that if one is commanded to call up a mental image that matches a particular object, he will need to call up another image to ensure that the first image matches with the object, and a third image to ensure that the third image matches with the second, and so on ad infinitum. This regress argument pertains more to the acclaimed transparency of the will as a connecting link, and not so much to its volitional character.

[54] Wittgenstein, *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, vol. I, pp. 73, 202.

efficacy of memory-images, and thus against sensations and feelings.

For James, there are cases where there is a clear split between intention and action, where actions can be neatly severed simply as movements and can be reduced to objects of observation that temporally follow one's wish or intention. The absurdity of this cleavage is on the same footing as that between a bridge and its destination point, the verbal rule and its application, physical ostension and the ostended, mental image and its object. One cannot delink the bridge and envisage it as magnetically linking to its destination; one already internalises the destination point in the bridge when one considers several options as to where it leads. One cannot create a vacuum between a bridge and the destination point and derive the latter from the former. Similar remarks apply to semantic bridges and their destiny referents. In the same vein, Wittgenstein would argue that willing does not consist in imagining a movement with a saturated content and then watching it (the movement) spurt forth from those antecedent imageries. Such decoupling of intention and bodily movement can occur in very special circumstances of internal contrasts. Suppose I am grating carrots in a superfine grater. I may be surprised by how my hand movements make such fine slices as contrasted with a blunt machine, or how my hands are moving in a circular fashion on a smooth paper in spite of my ineptitude in drawing (*PI* 616; also *RPP* 1 838; *Z* 592).

Wittgenstein further argues that while certain kinaesthetic sensations may go along with certain actions, this does not entitle the sensations to define such actions. If someone gave me the order to bend my arm and thereby produce a patent sensation, this would by no means provide a transparent connexion between the movement and the sensation. Here I would need a dense conceptual exercise to focus on a particular aspect and equate it with the action (*RPP* 1, 758b). This exercise seems interestingly similar to forcing rays of light coming from various sources to fall into a single pattern, or passing white light through crossing prisms into a single circle of dispersal and reversal.

In this connection, we need to digest comfortably the Wittgensteinian insight that sensations are not pre-lingual grounds of their verbal descriptions. When we think of the sensation of shuddering, the words 'It makes me shiver' are themselves such a shuddering reaction. '[I]f I hear and feel them as I utter them, this belongs among the rest of those sensations.' There is not a pre-lingual shuddering that is the ground of the verbal shuddering (*PI* p. 174). Again, when it is claimed that our kinaesthetic sensations advise us about the movement or position of our limbs, we cannot isolate or label a single sensation preceding our knowledge or description. When I let my index finger make a slight pendulum movement of small amplitude, I hardly feel it, only perhaps a slight tension at the fingertips and none at the joints. The empiricists would no doubt insist on a pre-linguistic chunk of sensation as a ground of my description or inference. They would say something like this: 'But after all, you must feel it, otherwise you wouldn't know (without looking) how your finger was moving' (*PI* p. 185). Wittgenstein points out that in this case, knowing the movement and position of our limbs is just being able to describe, and the kinaesthetic sensations are a part of the entire description (*PI* p. 185). Similar remarks would apply to situations where, on hearing a sound, I am able to tell the direction from which it came, for it affects one ear more strongly than the other, and yet I do not feel this in my ears (*PI* p. 185). According to the traditional empiricist account of perception, each ear can register the stimulus-content that affects it, so that the comparative exercise that this ear is more strongly affected than that ear is a complex cognition that cannot be received in the ear itself. While for the empiricists we *infer* this complex description of the direction of the incoming sound from pre-given bits of sensation, for Wittgenstein, language and description do not trail behind pre-given bits of sensations via concepts and inference; rather, they all forge an irreducible whole. Wittgenstein further speaks of certain situations where the sensation of pain advises us of the movement or position of the limbs or of the nature of the injury. Suppose one has just

regained consciousness and does not know whether his arms are stretched out—he finds out only by a piercing pain in his elbow. Contrary to what the empiricists usually claim, here the pain in the elbow is not an isolated ground for inferring its position, in the sense the sign 'OPEN' hung in front of a shop is the ground for inferring that the shopkeeper is in. Rather, feeling the nature of injury and the position of the arms are two *aspects* of the same feeling of pain. The yellowish hue of the photograph is not a ground for inferring how old it is, but the oldness is rather seen as an aspect of its yellow colour and vice versa. One can give the command: see this paper (beside the other colours) as white, now (beside the lump of snow) as grey; see this white-hot kettle alternately as a lighter shade of its original brown (*qua* the dispersal of its molecules), now see it as a darker shade of brown, concentrating all the heat, glow and the molecular force into itself. Just as it makes sense to instruct a person (say in a music lesson) to hear a bar under two aspects, say in a particular key, or as an introduction, it also makes sense to instruct one to feel his pain under two alternating aspects—say the exact location of the injury, *and* the extent to which other sensations (like itching, or a gentle touch of breeze on that area) are submerged by the pain (*PI* pp. 185, 186). Suppose again we have a musical theme played to us several times, each time in a slower tempo. We *sense* it, we *hear* it each time in a new aspect which is expressed by saying 'Now it is right,' 'Now at last it is a march,' 'Now at last it's a dance' (see also *RPP* 1 796).

There may be cases where moving a limb may be so painful as to drown all other sensations in that limb. Or when one is tired, drunk, or is suffering muscular pain or a burning skin, the sensation of taking a step may be different in each case. These cases might suggest that the sensations have a disembodied identity of their own, in terms of their overpowering intensity and multiple characteristics that break free of the closed physical identity of the limbs or the bodily configurations, leaving only a tentative, loose and inferential connection with bodily movements. But Wittgenstein clarifies that this apparent

emancipation of the kinaesthetic sensations from the limbs or the body only boils down to different styles in which the feelings are differently embodied, thus defying a single format, never posing an independent existence. In none of these cases does one need to look at the limb to ensure whether it really has been moved or not.

In fine, sensations can be said to be grounds of description, inference and activities, only as being already integrated into this complex. The need to demarcate between a pre-lingual, non-relational and non-aspectual block of sensation on the one hand, and language, description or inferential knowledge on the other, is rather the need for a grammatical distinction—the distinction between 'this' and 'so' in sentences like 'This feels so,' 'This looks so,' 'This tastes so,' and so on (*PI* p. 185).

Wittgenstein points out that our actions do not refer to sensations, they refer to movement's appearances. If asked to describe the arm's movements, I would have to move my arms several times in order to describe how it feels (*RPP* I 395). Wittgenstein's explicitly states that feeling is not the criterion for determining actions; rather, the action, the space and the objects are the criteria for determining the feeling (*PI* 625–26). Feelings do not come with a disembodied priority; that one has to repeat the action, to reinforce the pattern of movements, is to identify the feeling in terms of the movement, by creating a physiognomic cycle between them. This is what Wittgenstein means by saying that verbal descriptions do not replicate actions but provide a means of their identification. The repetition of the act followed up by a verbal description of the characteristic feeling is a sophisticated extension of the action—creating a paradigm to describe it. The feeling is identified in terms of a particular appearance of the movement. Besides, one may play a different game—by not giving a general characterisation of the feeling, but how it felt on that particular occasion. Ostension does not secure reference in an unambiguous manner; it can oscillate between generality and particularity, as we have seen with respect to ostending to a particular group of nuts and

saying 'two', where 'two' can be taken to be a proper name of that individual group of nuts or the general name of colour, etc. (discussed in chapter II, section 1.3)

As already noted, feelings and images delinked from movements and objects are like bridges delinked from destination points—they are like ghostly fragments. To sever the bridge from its destination is to sever space from its continuous expansion. Severing feelings and intentions from actions is also like severing space from its continuum—it is like creating a one-dimensional space additional to our three-dimensional one and creating a dichotomy between the two. But actually these are two types of space constructions, where the first is the private game of referring that confines space to a particular sense organ and a specific orientation, and the second game is to neutralise it to common set of coordinates. The absurdity of the causal model is on a par with duplicating and severing space into two kinds. When one claims to identify the action in terms of feelings, one falls into the impasse of how one-dimensional space (feelings) can generate three-dimensional space without the latter serving as the intermediary link. One can at best play the private game of referring with such actions, or one can play the causal game of fragmenting the action and its putative antecedents, creating epistemological gaps in the narration. But one cannot create two spaces—one temporal space and another three-dimensional space—and forge a causal connection between the two.

3.2 *Wittgenstein against the Innervation Theory of Will*

According to the innervation theory of the will, voluntary actions are distinguished by a feeling of innervation or a feeling of impulse associated with the current passing from the brain to the muscles that stimulates movements. Scott notes that this theory was supported by Wundt and Helmholtz, and apart from Wittgenstein was opposed by both James and Davidson.

One obviously simple objection is that the agent, in order to activate his appropriate muscles in the required way, does

not need to individuate his action in terms of a unique feeling of innervation. Besides, Wittgenstein very aptly points out that rest or abstention from voluntary movement is itself a voluntary action (*RPP* I 845). Similarly one can think, change aspect or calculate in one's head voluntarily without any feeling associated with the mental activity (*RPP* I 759). Wittgenstein further points out that if willing is a feeling of say, muscular contraction, then willing to move my arm is something that happens to me rather than something that I bring about. We have seen how Wittgenstein threshes out the important characteristic of willing as not being a happening—either active or passive—through a demonstration of contrastive uses. In fine, feelings of innervation are not something that one does or brings about before acting; one just innervates one's muscles or has that feeling by way of acting. In this sense, Wittgenstein's view seems to be on par with Davidson's refutation of basic actions, for the latter also said that one activates one's muscles by acting; the first does not temporally antecede the latter.

In this connection, it would be interesting to ponder on the status of linguistic actions, particularly referring games. Would the utterance of words in ostensive teaching, or the emission of particular noises corresponding to different colour samples, or forming images in answer to certain names of objects, claim to be preceded by characteristic feelings of muscle contraction of our speech organ? The last case will need another image about how to form an image, and thus would be obviously saddled with an infinite regress.

Besides, had this innervation been a volitional activity, one could have been commanded to innervate one's muscles. That we cannot be so commanded falsifies the theory. We can at most be commanded to form a mental image of the innervations. Wittgenstein reminds us that tensing one's arm muscles and raising the arm are two distinct events, and hence the former cannot define the latter.

Further, when patients are fed with artificial stimulation of their motor nerves and made to make certain movements, they

are reported to realise that these movements are not voluntary. This is supposed to prove that there is a particular kind of feeling that defines a kind of voluntary action, in the absence of which the action lapses into a mere involuntary happening. But Wittgenstein would intervene that it is not the absence of a specific feeling that constitutes the involuntariness of the action, but the unexpectedness of the happening or the absence of a background. Wittgenstein cites the example of a doctor trying to placate a patient by saying that in so far as the feeling characterising the movement is not a bad feeling, the patient should not bother about its being involuntary. Wittgenstein complains that this approach is wrong, the doctor should reckon with the absence and vacuity of the entire background that constitutes the involuntary character of the movement.

It emerges that if the bridge and the destination points are different, one cannot link the two through a foundational mechanism, be it the mechanism of reason and reasoned, or cause and effect. If one plays the game of internality of reason, then one cannot play the externality of a cause and effect. Both the descriptivist and the non-descriptivist theories share a common faulty presupposition, viz., that the referent is external and has to be captured conceptually or causally. The descriptive model extracts a thin layer from the external referent and joins it to the language; the non-descriptive model places the referent outside, not joined through a thin layer, but connected to the referrer through a causal link. Both theories situate the reference in the external space-time container. Wittgenstein would say that just as every ostender may fail to take us to the uniquely ostended and thus end up being another ostended, just as every rule fails to take us to an application but itself turns out to be an applied instance, similarly every attempt to act might fail to fructify into the unique action, itself becoming an action. The attempt in the shape of willing or innervation of muscles does not lie suspended in the air, delinked from the action, just as the ostender does not hang as a thin membrane delinked from the ostended.

3.3 *Wittgenstein against Trying*

Apart from the ideomotor theory and innervations, Scott discusses O'Shaughnessy's treatment of *trying* as a possible foundation of action.[55] Like the Fregean sense—a thin layer taken out and mediating between the object and its referrer—this comes as an actional counterpart, a ghostly membrane interspersed between the wish and the action, telling you the exact route that takes you from the first to the second. For Wittgenstein, both the sense or description on the one hand and trying on the other are designed to reach out to the referent and the action respectively. In this endeavour, the sense either fails to reach out to the intended referent, turning itself into a different referent by its own right, requiring another sense to be available to it, or if it does reach out to the referent, it does so only at the cost of merging with the latter. Similarly, trying itself in its attempt to reach out to an action either turns into an independent action by its own right calling for its foundation, or, if it does fructify into the action, it does so only at the cost of collapsing with the latter.

4. Austin and Wittgenstein on Actions and Adverbial Modifiers

In this section, I focus on Austin's philosophical feat of dissolving the cleavage between the referential identity of actions and their adverbial modifiers—an exercise which parallelly breaks the binary opposition between the voluntary and the involuntary, intentional and the unintentional. I project Austin in terms of my specific agenda in this chapter—that of breaking the reference/ description dichotomy with respect to actions and action-words. Though Wittgenstein did not engage specifically with the issue of how adverbial modifiers (specially of the excuse family) can be effectively deployed to break the official dichotomy between

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[55] B. O'Shaughnessy, *The Will: A Dual Aspect Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 365. He is also quoted in Scott, 'Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Action', p. 356.

the reference and description of action-words, it is precisely for this innocuous reticence that I am motivated to extract as many threads of connection between these two philosophers on this area. I shall attempt to offer a bonus of applied philosophy in the end, by dwelling on how this confused dichotomy between reference and description of action-words and the mythical dichotomy between the voluntary and the involuntary distorts our moral judgements.

As we know, according to the Augustinian model, each word refers to an entity—a proper name would refer to a bare individual, a common noun or an adjective would refer to bare properties or relations, verbs and adverbs would ideally refer to pure actions and pure modifiers of actions respectively. It is these separate entities that are combined into descriptions or full sentences. While we have said enough of what Wittgenstein had to say against this model in the earlier chapters, we let him strike a blow again, with a single stroke—through a simple appeal to common usage. We never say that a sick man is a combination of man and sickness (*PG* p. 58, para 20).

Properties like skill and luck do not have self-identical and neatly detachable content that repeats itself among chess, tennis and bridge. The games of chess and tennis do not wait as pure individuals to receive the pure properties of skill and luck. (As Wittgenstein says at *PI* 66: 'Look at the parts played by skill and luck; and at the difference between skill in chess and skill in tennis.') It is different skills that shape the game of chess differently from the game of tennis. (Following this logic, we can go to the further extent of saying that in each case it is a different skill that shapes each particular game of chess.)

It is Wittgenstein's concentration on games and the so-called properties of games, like skill, luck, amusement, competition, that help him dissolve the split between the individual and the property. Now, though Austin never mentioned Wittgenstein in his article 'A Plea for Excuses' (nor brought in the Augustinian model as a target of his attack), we can legitimately argue that while Wittgenstein sought to break essences principally with

respect to nouns and adjectives, Austin sought to do this with respect to verbs and adverbs, actions and modes or modifiers. And while Wittgenstein concentrates on games and family and their properties like skill, luck, amusement, winning and losing, colour of the hair and eyes, structure of nose, gait, etc., Austin engages with the family of excuse adverbs ('voluntarily', 'involuntarily', 'intentionally', 'unintentionally', 'inadvertently', 'mistakenly', 'unwittingly', etc.). While for Wittgenstein it is the predicates that shape the nouns, for Austin it is the excuses that shape the actions rather than being added on to unmodified actions lying beforehand. There are some suggestions on the same track by Wittgenstein himself with regard to actions, which we shall play up at the appropriate junctures.

The Augustinian model (of the reference/description divide) also entails a binary opposition between each predicate and its negative. With the presupposition of the referential identity of each action, each common noun, verb or adverb will also denote a neatly bounded entity, and would thereby exclude a chunk as falling under the negative counterpart. Thus if we attach a word, say 'skilled', to an individual game, this would also exclude that game from the range of non-skilled activities. If we attach 'voluntarily' or 'intentionally' to an action, it would neatly exclude that game from the range of involuntary or unintentional actions.

Once we question the Augustinian model, we also come to appreciate:

(a) An individual thing or action is already conceived as propertied or modified, before a pair of opposed predicates—skilled/unskilled, or intentionally/unintentionally—is applied to it. Austin points out that one does not apply 'skilled/unskilled' to a baby's antics or 'intentional/unintentional' to normal actions like sitting or sewing, etc. There is no neutral or briefer content of the action prior to its receiving either of the opposite excuses. Wittgenstein specifically says that 'good', like many other words of our language ('game',

'family', 'beauty'), is also a family resemblance term which does not carry an identically repeatable essence through each of its occurrences.[56] One mathematical paradigm does not foreshadow the others, e.g., the paradigm of '2 + 2 = 4' does not necessitate '1000 + 2 = 1002', as the paradigms may take on different meanings with each range of 1000.[57] Similarly, there will not be any compelling transition from 'Childcare is good' to 'Honour killing of children is wrong.' What holds all the 'good' actions (like promise keeping, truth telling, marital fidelity) together are certain overlapping similarities. This ultimately boils down to the crucially important insight that we are trying to impress: actions do not lie out there as pre-given chunks ready to receive the attributes of goodness or badness; their very identities are shaped and reshaped in and through the moral predications.[58] To take three actions: (*a*) killing the Nemi king as a matter of ritual to preserve his soul; (*b*) killing him for some definite gain; (*c*) an act 'of killing' to save one's own life. Each of these actions carves out uniquely different wholes with uniquely different incidents that are inextricably woven with each of them. One cannot pick out a common referential identity shared by all of these, something which we can name as, say, 'terminating the vital activities' or some similar nomenclature.[59]

(b) Austin further says that each adverb, including negative ones like 'involuntarily' or 'unintentionally', constructs the action and does on trail behind its positive counterpart confining itself to the region supposedly left out by it.

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[56] See *PI* 65–77 for Wittgenstein's notion of family resemblance, specifically 77 for his observation on 'good'.

[57] See *PI* 185–202 for Wittgenstein's treatment of rule following in general and also of mathematical rules in particular.

[58] See Ambrose, *Wittgenstein's Lectures*, p. 35: '… the meaning of the word "good" is bound up with the act it modifies.'

[59] See Austin, 'A Plea for Excuses', for a brilliant exposition as to how actions are shaped in and through their ethical predicates or adverbial modifiers.

We shall try to flesh out these points with respect to points 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 and 11 in Austin's paper. It is generally supposed that within all pairs of opposite excuses, one of them may surely be inserted justifiably or informatively with any verb. But with normal verbs like kick, eat, crochet, no modifying expression is required or permissible. There are, however, some exceptional circumstances, such as when one walks to defy the doctor's advice to rest, or when one's breathing activity is under the scrutiny of a Jain who can conjecture whether the activity of breathing in live germs is occurring intentionally or unintentionally. Except for such aberrations, verbs and adverbs come blended into an indissoluble whole with the modifier already built into the action before the above question meaningfully arises. If we go back to instances like flipping the switch, making forward movements with one's legs on the ground, or playing referring games (like ostensive teaching and learning of words or putting pieces on the board), in none of these cases do we start with a bare physical movement and ask whether it is intentional or unintentional. The case is like the query 'Is this a man or a post?', where 'this' is already conceptualised. For Wittgenstein, understanding is not going from signs to extra-linguistic reality (Russell),[60] nor from signs to a transparent sign-independent thoughts in the third realm (Frege[61]). Understanding is, rather, moving from a relatively strange set of signs to an easily surveyable symbolism (*PG* p. 40). But can we not start with a piece of movement already ascribed with an intension and then later realise it as a causal happening unrepresented by the so-called agent herself? Now that may happen, but when we revert the reason game into the causal game, then we project the caused involuntary happening in a *different* layout with a different content, absorbing different antecedents and consequents—altogether a *different* physical identity. So it is not the self-same physical event that we start with, nor the self-same event that we return

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[60] Russell, *Philosophy of Logical Atomism*.

[61] Frege, 'The Thought: A Logical Inquiry'.

to after withdrawing one of the opposite pairs of adverbs. To put the point a bit differently, when an adverb or its negation is applied apparently to the same action, actually the positive and negative pick out different actions. It is not the *same* action that receives either a positive modifier *or* a negative modifier.

Wittgenstein's steadfast resistance against a decisive and saturated feeling clearly distinguishing the 'voluntary' and 'involuntary' modifications of the putatively 'same' action needs to be refreshed at this juncture. Eating, drinking, walking are usually beyond the voluntary/involuntary dichotomy, for ascribing the predicate 'voluntary' to these actions cannot avail the required contrast case. The unusual circumstances where these dichotomies apply would not (as already noted in our treatment of Austin) make sense of a commonly identifiable action accompanied by a characteristic feeling of volition on one occasion and neatly absent on another occasion. In that case, as Wittgenstein pertinently points out, involuntary eating or drinking would simply be the agent's moving his limbs in the appropriate way, *without* the required willing experience. One may claim to have a feeling of unreality, of being distant from the action, as contrasted with the felt involvement with the voluntary one—thus claiming a neatly separable identity of the action that can easily get into and out of its relation with the feeling. But Wittgenstein points out that often such cases of a seemingly bare action are simply symptoms of acute fatigue or the onset of mental illusion. Such fatigued actions are absorbed in a backdrop that is radically different from the action done under normal circumstances, leaving no vestige of a purely physical movement. Wittgenstein further argues that if one is constrained by some hi-tech tools to eat, walk, etc., those would be rather movements of limbs (*RPP* I 902) that schematically resemble the action bereft of its substantial intentional character. Such movements may happen when one is unconscious or behaving under narcosis, or when the movement goes on without the person knowing anything about it, or when one's eyes are shut. In all these cases one lacks the ability to adjust the movements, or

have the necessary sensori-motor skills for proprioception. Here again the minimal identity of the preliminary intention or the bare referential identity of the event with a space-time enclosure fails to hold ground. So in fine, the voluntary/involuntary epithets are dimensions to measure actions; they do not share a referrable identity, still less can such identity be said to recur in the putative involuntary counterpart.

This approach of Austin and Wittgenstein sharply departs from that of Davidson, who, we have seen, would make several stratifications within the ontology of actions. He would posit an emaciated skeletal event with a definite spatio-temporal outline, load it with a minimal intention to start with—which in its turn would be projected as receiving alternative intensional ascriptions. And according to him, each of these actions with or without their respective intensional ascriptions is still a particular bearing an external relation with its adverbial modifiers. Rajiv's action of flipping the switch has the same physical and semantic identity independent of adverbial modifiers like 'gracefully', 'with his left hand', at such and such a place or time, etc.[62] But the same remarks will obviously not apply to the adverb 'intentionally' or 'unintentionally' for the simple reason that the intention falls within the mental antecedents of the action as the precipitating cause. However, as we have noted, whether Davidson would (unwittingly) allow a simpler and briefer description of action with a minimal intension or simply rest assured with its bare physical identity, he would allow them to receive further ascriptions with a richer content. To repeat: he would not only allow ∃e ((Flips the switch (Rajiv, e)) and

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[62] Davidson was indeed sensitive to the distinction between attributive adverbs (like slowly, quickly) and non-attributive adverbs (with his right hand, at place p or at time t, etc.) Unlike the second type, the first type resists a split between the noun and itself. For example, one cannot conjoin 'It was quick' to the sentence 'Jones swam across the English Channel in 10 hours'—for here the quickness blends inextricably with the act of swimming. See Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events*, Essay 6, pp. 106–7.

(Cautious (e))) but also ∃e ((Flips the switch (Rajiv,e)) and Drives off a bat (Rajiv, e).

There is every reason to think that Austin too, like Wittgenstein, would take the briefer description of a minimal intention to be a formal requirement that cashes out through each of the alternative intensional ascriptions. To take one of Austin's examples, where he conceives of a person dropping a tea-tray done with alternative intentions, like: (*a*) to avert an ensuing outburst; (*b*) to avoid a wasp sting; (*c*) to accomplish an exercise of self-impoverishment. It is again vain to search for a common physical identity shared by all these actions. As argued previously, one could not have demarcated this brute physical identity—one could not have settled on when and where it starts, or charted out the precise configuration of the limbs and the objects with which they engage—unless one had already invested it with an intention. Davidson has indeed recognised this, though this recognition does not fit well with his causal theory. Besides, what he did *not* appreciate is that this minimal intention fleshes out in and through every alternative description and does not precede it. One first conceives all these alternatives and then tries to cast all of them in a minimal frame, instead of the latter being available to us from the very outset. More importantly, the putatively extensional identity posited by Davidson as a bare space-time outline on which all alternative intensions are to be grafted is alien to Austin's view of actions.

Drawing from Iris Murdoch,[63] we can explore an example where apparently the same set of physical behaviours and linguistic usages are—to put it in a manner neutral vis-à-vis the causal theory and the reason theory—set in the background of very different intentions. A mother named M feels very hostile towards her daughter-in-law D, who, though reckoned as good-hearted, is found to be stupid, unpolished and undignified. Let us assume two alternative scenarios where M's attitude

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[63] Iris Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), pp. 16–23.

is substantially different, but her outward behaviours and manoeuvres with D are exactly the same. Her previous estimate of D as 'vulgar', 'insufficiently ceremonious', 'brusque and noisy', 'sometimes positively rude', 'always tiresomely juvenile' is subsequently revised as 'refreshingly simple', 'spontaneous', 'gay', 'delightfully youthful', etc. To prove our point, let us shear off the passage of time and recast this example as an occurrence of the same physical behaviour or the same action, which is nevertheless backed up by alternative sets of intentions. Now how would Davidson handle this proposal? His possible commitment to the *same action* in these two alternative scenarios would be a troubled exercise: he would have to struggle with whether and how to preserve a minimally intentioned behaviour—like M's inviting D to her house, greeting her, narrating stories about her son's childhood, feeding D delicacies—and all these actions in the two alternative scenarios being caused by the same intention, involving a common set of epithets about D. But to account for the significant difference between these two scenarios, Davidson would have to back this common intention with different sets of beliefs about D, incorporating the different sets of predicates about D as specified above. Against this contrived artificiality of Davidson's scheme, Wittgenstein's approach would no doubt be philosophically more enriching and profound. This approach, as we now know, is to metamorphose the different sets of beliefs, desires and intentions about D in M's mind into her subsequent behaviours. This exercise will also need one to absorb the so-called history of this mental transformation of M—her 'self-reflection', 'self-criticism', the process of giving 'careful, loving and just attention' to D, seeing her in a 'progressive and infinitely perfectible way'—into the actions themselves, leaving no extensional identity as being commonly shareable between these two alternative scenarios.

In the Augustinian model where each word denotes an immaculate object, all opposition is cast in terms of mutually exclusive entities either in the contrary or in the contradictory mode of opposition. In the contradictory mode of opposition the

negation of 'voluntary' includes actions which are involuntary or non-voluntary as well as things to which none of these predicates apply. On the other hand, 'voluntary/involuntary' expresses a contrary mode of opposition. Now Austin shows that opposite excuses cannot even be treated as contraries. As he says, the opposites of 'voluntarily' are 'under constraint' or 'under duress', while the opposites of 'involuntarily' may be 'deliberately' or 'on purpose', none of which is equivalent to 'voluntarily'. This shows that 'voluntarily' and 'involuntarily', though being opposites, do not belong to the same category; they are actually 'fish from very different kettles'. We can further argue on behalf of Austin that had each verb and adverb denoted a pure unmodified action and neatly bounded properties of actions respectively, negation of one would bring us back to one of the excluded alternatives. To break through this dichotomous model of negation is to break through putative essences. We realise that as 'voluntarily' does not denote a fixed essence, there is no question of 'involuntarily' to be determined by its opposite essence. The negative adverb 'involuntarily', rather, constructs the action in a radically different way—so much so that its negation (i.e., 'not involuntarily') does not come back to 'voluntarily'. This shows that often words having a negative particle have a primary sense, not that they always limp behind their positive counterpart. Rather, excuses with a negative particle bring out a primary and positive failure that does not trail behind a positive success. Austin gives the example of a particular excuse, 'inadvertently', which never occurs in its positive form. With many excuse adverbs, their positive counterparts merely rule out the suggestion of abnormality—they do not connote a positive and primary normality as the starting point. This is for the same reason that the adverbs 'voluntarily' or 'intentionally' do not attach to normal actions like 'sitting' or crocheting'. Austin explores an interesting point with the adverb 'inadvertently': it has a positive and primary content ascribable to a special class of actions, e.g., when I am said to crush a snail inadvertently, the negative particle in this adverb suggests that the action is

to be subsumed under a broader class (i.e., walking down the pavement), and the former action should, but actually fails to, conform to certain norms of performing the generic action, viz., moving one's legs in the proper manner. Now the predicate with a double negation, viz., 'not inadvertently', performs the special task of lifting this action (of crushing the snail) from the special class as explained above—it does not trail behind the supposed primacy of 'advertency'. Had this been so, then the word 'advertently' would have meant 'deliberately' (following the proper style of limb movement). But interestingly, 'not inadvertently' does not by the traditional rule of double negation come back to 'deliberately', but often means a substantially new property, viz., 'overall absent-mindedness'. This again shows that excuse adverbs do not denote determinate essences and hence do not follow the logic of neat mutual exclusion.

Wittgenstein's analysis of negation can be effectively used—with refreshed resources—to appreciate Austin's treatment of the same. Wittgenstein argues that if the law of significant negation compels the negative to trail behind, or be parasitic upon, a pure positive presence, then by the force of this logic, in statements like 'I did not dream last night,' 'I have no pain in my arm,' one has to have the hint of the dream or of the pain to indicate their respective loci (*PI* 447–48).

Wittgenstein's attack against verbal rules as well as inner and outer ostension should make it clear that negation does not have an essence that can be captured in the sign of negation, nor in the inward shaking of our head, or in gestures of exclusion and rejection. The positive essence as well as the picture of striking it out in one blow figure as lumpy images which are never activated in actual uses (*PI* 547). Negation has no repeatable identity that would recur from one incidence of 'not' to another, from 'Iron does *not* melt' to '2 + 2 is *not* equal to 5, just as the same essence of oneness does not recur from 'This rod is one yard long' and 'Here is one soldier.' But that 'one' does not have different meanings in different cases is effected by our uses—our operations of correlating one soldier with one

yard and two soldiers with two yards. There is no pre-actional identity of *one* to be referred to, so is there no pre-actional identity of the positive to be blotted out by the uniform act of negation. For Wittgenstein, meaning creeps on through a flow of family resemblances with a constant adding and shedding of fibres where one meaning glides into its negation. Meaning for Wittgenstein is never like a pure presence to be blown off by one stroke of the tool of negation; rather, as the meanings of words evolve through their mutual interplay, so do the meanings of the negative particles like 'un-', 'in-', 'non-','not', etc.

Once we are able to problematise the enclosures of affirmation and negation as not lying in the objects but rather in our nature, we shall also be able to imagine languages which do not even carry a neat negative particle as counterparts of our 'not' 'in-', 'un-', etc., as an essential ingredient of their syntax or semantics. Instead, they may have a different pitch of voice as their operation of negation, and totally lack the operation of double negation as coming back to the original affirmation. Thought experiments with such a language sensitise us to the fact that as there is nothing like an original affirmative with a well-bounded content in the first place, the tool of blotting it out and thereby going back to the original may not be a compelling feature of all languages (*PI* 554). The standard enunciations of affirmation, negation and double negations are not grafted into the nature of things, but are language-games ensconced in the forms of living. The standard enunciation of numbers as an unending series of paradigmatic units is given not in the nature of things, but in mathematical language-games, embossed in a form of living. Wittgenstein's exercise of displacing these standard theories and practices on negation and numbers brings us closer to appreciating Austin's treatment of negation with respect to adverbs and actions.

Wittgenstein innovates interesting situations that would serve as effective rejoinders to the traditional theories of negation. He asks us to conceive of a language with two tools of negation—x and y—where doubling x yields an affirmative and doubling y

yields a strengthened negative; while for their single occurrence they have exactly the same function of standard negation. The following question crops up: 'Do "x" and "y" have the same meaning when they are not repeated?' The question should not be interpreted as the query whether both 'x' and 'y' in their single operation hook on to the positive essence of the word meaning and take it to its equally well-enclosed exclusion. The sameness and difference of the meanings of 'x' and 'y' lie in the ways they are taught and learnt—say in shaking heads for single negations, and as pictures of revolving 180 degrees in the case of double negation, a special way of pronouncing or putting brackets, etc. And herewith comes our old reminder—none of these tactics or tools for teaching will have an insulated content of its own, independent of the indefinite motley of uses.

It emerges that as long as we labour under the Augustinian picture of an action being an empty locus or having a briefer descriptive content that receives further adverbial descriptions, we are also under the fear of incompatible predicates invading the same locus. As we learn to see the action and modifier woven into a seamless complex, we also see how incompatible adverbs like 'intentionally' and 'not deliberately' and 'not on purpose' can all be incorporated into the complex.[64]

The moral judgement passed on the manslaughter of Thomas Watkins[65] labours under the following misconception. It seems to conceive the action of killing Watkins as a mere

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[64] Austin, 'A Plea for Excuses', Point 6.

[65] Ibid., Point 7. The case can be described briefly as follows. A prisoner was kept in a lunatic asylum and entrusted with the regular duty of giving a hot bath to a particular mental patient named Watkins. One morning after Watkins had finished his bath, the prisoner asked him to come out so that he could clean the bath and make it ready for the next use. A concurrence of several events followed—the prisoner's attention was diverted, he omitted to check whether Watkins had really come out, and lastly, he mistakenly turned on only the hot tap (for cleaning). As a result, Watkins was scalded to death. The prisoner's action was finally judged to be unintentional and he was declared not guilty.

physical movement which can receive either of the two mutually exclusive modifiers—'voluntarily/involuntarily', or 'intentionally/unintentionally'. The intention of killing Watkins is supposed to exclude neatly the innocent and morally good intention of giving him a bath. Austin's analysis reveals that it is not the same action (the self-same physical movement) that can be done voluntarily or involuntarily. The so-called involuntary action of killing Watkins cannot be thinned down to bare physical movements to which the morally good intention of giving him a bath is added on. It is actually an intricate action embodying many antecedent and subsequent phases— the inattention, callousness, diversion, mistaking taps—thus opening up a complex sphere demanding a more comprehensive moral judgement, adequately addressing all its elements. Further, the judges while describing and defending the action treated all excuse adverbs ('did not believe that the lunatic was in', 'made a mistake in the taps', 'did not believe that he was letting in hot water', 'attention was diverted', 'no culpable negligence') as being equivalent and all attaching to a single and simple physical movement (scalding to death), thus qualifying it as unintentional. But on close analysis each of these excuses picks out different actions or different phases of the complex action. The prisoner did not scald Watkins intentionally, but talked to or got diverted by the other attendant intentionally. He did not turn on the hot tap knowingly, but omitted double-checking the tap knowingly or intentionally. This is an occasion to realise that negation is identical with its positive locus. These exercises with our usage of excuse adverbs make it clear that excuses *refer to* or *describe* an action in so many different ways.[66] Here, Austin's way of alternating between *referring or describing* seems to be an exercise of alternating between different language-games—and not between different ontologies—thus enabling him to blend the putative reference of action-words into their modifiers. In fine, the conceptual errors of the judges in merging the meanings of different adverbs, splitting the action into a physical movement

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[66] Ibid., Point 11.

and external modifiers, investing each adverb with an exclusive essence, negating an adverb into a vacuous lump—all these result in a gross criminal negligence. Austin holds that an overall study of the law and history of criminal cases shows that moral judgements are based on two basic misconceptions:

(a) A split between action as unmodified, thinned-out content and the volition and intention being added to them.
(b) That volition or freedom is an absolute essence that demarcates it from non-volition—various forms of constraint. Thus an action cannot receive incompatible modifiers, voluntarily and involuntarily.[67]

This narrative emerges as a wonderful occasion for seeing how the philosophy of language with its patent issues can break away from the confines of academic discourse to inform the burning problems of everyday life.

5. Reading Wittgenstein beyond the Determinism/ Indeterminism Divide

In this section, I will first attempt to treat Wittgenstein's essay 'Lectures on Freedom of the Will'[68] as a move beyond the traditional polemics about determinism versus indeterminism. This will open up a new track to read Wittgenstein's discourse on freedom of will with that of Austin as presented in his 'A Plea For Excuses' in the next section. Overall, I hope to show Wittgenstein as breaking away from a fetishised notion of freedom that feeds on terminal limits of space, in quite the same manner as he breaks away from the fetishised notion of referents as limiting points in the space-container—thereby rising over the descriptivist versus non-descriptivist theories of reference.

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[67] Ibid., Points 7, 11.
[68] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Occasions*, 1912–31, eds J. C. Klagge and Alfred Nordmann (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993), pp. 429– 44.

Freedom as conceived in more sophisticated theories of determinism consists in generating more and more layers of conditional probabilities, and proliferating more and more options within each layer. That is, instead of saying 'If P then agent A will do Q,' this conditional probability model of determinism will go on adding phases—'If P then if S then Q,' 'If P and S then if W then Q'—and so on. For the determinists, it is the overwhelming number and variety of options flaring up in every stage, and the agent choosing one amongst them, that constitutes his freedom. But what he chooses is due to another intervening event, so that if the same conditional structure— with its internal layers of conditions—is repeated, he will do the same action. The indeterminist will object that if all the initial conditions are exactly the same, the agent at each stage can come up with a different wish, will or action. For the indeterminist, nothing less than this possibility can constitute freedom. But for the determinist, this prospect of the wish, will or action hanging loose from its antecedent conditions and thus from the agent herself will turn each of them into a chance or random event, which cannot meet the required notion of freedom.

However, from Wittgenstein's point of view, both these enemy camps are speaking in the same language. For the determinist, an apparent exception to the rule of the *same* condition yielding the *same* action throws down the challenge to divide space into more and more layers of conditional probabilities, more and more challenges to dig up that hidden microchip of space that caused the apparent anomaly in the deterministic mechanism. For the indeterminist, what figures as this mysterious and ever-elusive chip of space in the deterministic framework is actually a chip of non-space. When exactly the same initial conditions do not yield the same result, what creates the difference is the volition, containing itself as the enigmatic state of mind that holds itself aloof from all causal relations in space. It is projected as the consummated and penultimate state before action, that can yet recoil into itself refusing to generate or be generated by anything. It was this *atemporal*, *ahistorical*, or *acausal* character

of the will without any stress or strain that Wittgenstein described as being without any 'mass' or 'inertia' (*PI* 618).

Davidson's theory of mental causation which cuts out a third option apart from the determinist/indeterminist opposition is yet cast in the same model. For all these theories, the antecedents of the action stop with full-blown content before the latter. For the determinist, the antecedent necessarily generates the action; for the indeterminist it may not; while for Davidson the *all-out* unconditional judgement may generate the action or just stop with pure intending. Davidson can say that it is precisely the non-nomological character of mental causation that does not accommodate the question as to which additional condition required to generate the effect is lacking. However, Davidson's theory of mental causation, in so far as it segregates the action from its putative mental antecedent, falls within the same model of freedom as based on spatial (or non-spatial) limits.

Let us see how one can read Wittgenstein's 'Lectures on Freedom of the Will' as resisting the common presuppositions that I propose is lurking in all these three theories. Here, Wittgenstein first explores the exact significance of scientific determinism in the physical or material realm, and then its extension to human action as undertaken by the determinists, which finally exposes the absurdity of this theory. The determinists claim that the decisions we make are not free; they are determined by the natural laws of anatomy, physiology and neurology. Now Wittgenstein argues that any claim to the effect that natural laws determine human behaviours—like the rails determining the movement of trains—falls into a dilemma: (A) If the law holds (i.e., the rails do determine the movement of the train), we have to exhibit this law as holding *by itself* (as if the rails uphold the shadow of the upcoming train) independent of and prior to its particular application. (B) If the law does *not* hold, then also one has to chart out the ideal condition of its validation and the exact path of the present failure or deviation. As none of these options is feasible, the theory of determinism cannot be upheld at least in its standard version. The previous

chapter already made an attempt to appreciate the foundational splits in the Newtonian scheme (between gravitational mass and inertial mass) which reappear in the theories of meaning—in the shape of a split between ostender and ostended, rule and application, volition and action. As we know, for Wittgenstein, the ostender itself disperses into the ostended, the rule itself dissolves into the application, and the will or intention itself meshes into action. Instead of spreading out the uses and behaviours as space and spatial relations, the determinists insist that there must be a lump contained *in* space, somewhere out there, that is determining human behaviour—stretching over the intermediary space in between. There must be some terminal point in space (near or far), in a hitherto undiscovered layer of conditional probabilities, from which there sprawls out an unexplored route to the behaviours and phenomena under investigation. It is this theory of space as an external container wherein all determinations obtain in a causal mode across empty space that appears and reappears as the target of Wittgenstein's attack—whether it is the theory of ostension, of verbal rules, or claims of actional determination usually thought to be encapsulated in the circumstances of our anatomy and education. We can read his resistance to determinism as primarily pitched against the model of external space—the model of investing all explanatory obligations in an external foundation—in the shape of a dogged insistence that someday we shall find out more phases of conditionals and more states hidden in the depths of the human body, in unexplored neural synapses, unexcavated terminal points in space equipped with unexcavated links to our behaviour. It cannot be repeated too often that for Wittgenstein, what science will explore is how our behaviour spaces out those putative lumps claimed to be *in* space, dissolving them into a seamless complex, leaving no question for a deterministic mechanism to operate.

Rephrased in terms of verbal foundationalism, the theory of determinism claims that whatever is going to happen is written in some Book of Nature. In case of any discrepancy—say if

the prediction of A becoming DSC in 3 years turns out to be 6 years—this is not a refutation of fatalism, but a reinterpretation of the symbol '3', posing it as a cipher admitting of different modifications. 'Cipher' means either a secret code, or a zero (i.e., nothing). On the second alternative, it amounts to an empty variable or placeholder which only takes the value on different occasions of substitution. So when '3' is recast into a different meaning to match the prediction, it is clear that '3' is being treated as a cipher. Wittgenstein makes the further point that often the prediction turns out to be just a circular statement repeating what is already stated in the original one. The predictions take the form 'If people are hungry they want to eat,' 'Cold always produces a reaction of wanting to get warm.' Wittgenstein observes that predictions of the economic behaviour of people as they are reported in newspapers are actually tautologous statements phrased in a prophetic format, presenting the stance of a dazzling discovery. Examples of such predictions include: 'Increase of wage rates in China will see many Indians leaving their jobs and migrating to China,' or, 'That custom duties on products have been increased will cause a lethargy in people, making them less productive.' These prophecies hide many agendas in their bodies, so that all failures in the prophecies are sought to be filled up by the non-fulfilment of those hidden provisions. The fulfilment of those provisions is eternally postponed (till we find that superfine chip of space placed somewhere in eternity); thereby, the validity of the prophecies are sought to be *eternally* satisfied.

It emerges that our actions do not happen *in* space as determined by external foundations like cellular changes, neural happenings, etc.; the actions absorb the latter in *creating* that space. Wittgenstein points out that our actions occur *in and through* these happenings; it is not that they antecede and determine our actions. Wittgenstein seeks to drive the point home with the help of some poignant analogies. He refers to advertisements on kidney drugs that came out in the *Evening News* paper in 1936. Medical reports say that there are tiny tubes

inside our kidneys measuring up to 15 miles, and this involves the misleading suggestion that the kidneys have to operate on an external space of 15 miles—just as a vacuum cleaner works through a 15-mile-long corridor. Our excretory system does not function *by* cleaning 15 miles of kidney; rather, our excretory function *amounts to* cleaning the kidney. The very identity of the kidneys consists in carving out a 15-mile functioning space of tubes. One cannot externalise the kidney space as a separate, inert lump, and then wonder at how this inert lump works over 15 miles of space. It is not that a cleaning machine has to be applied in a 15-mile-long corridor, where the vacuum cleaner is spatially detachable from the corridor. Rather, the functioning of the kidney *is* cleaning the kidney—the two are spatially inseparable. Similarly, knowing the neurons and the biological mechanism of the action does not enable one to see the former as anteceding and determining the actions.

Looked at in another way, this kidney example effectively illustrates Wittgenstein's observations against the linear containment model of space, i.e., his way of envisaging the small space as containing the larger and the larger space as created by the division of the smaller (*PI* 48, discussed in section 1.12, chapter II of this work). The kidney space does not contain 15-mile-long tubes, passively, geometrically folded in intricate curvatures; rather, this geometry has to be activated by the actual functioning of the kidney, by dynamically exploding the smaller space into a larger expanse.

Wittgenstein further says that even if one concedes a deterministic relation holding between one's drunkenness, educational achievements and behaviours, the supposed determinants themselves are undetermined or free. On a smooth plane, a motor car is determined to move in a straight line by a steering wheel and a throttle (choke or strangler), but otherwise the wobbly movements of the steering wheel and the throttle are themselves undetermined. What Wittgenstein means perhaps is that a wish is a dispersive stretch of activities which get a compact direction to develop into an action. The steering wheel

and the throttle may have more options of movement that is scattered, but with the other mechanisms of the car, the wheel and the throttle get the car to move in a straight line when the road is a plane. So here we see the wobbly movements of the wheel and the throttle as being a space that continually expands into the space of the entire car moving on a straight line on a plane. When one's action stops short at a wish, it does not stop at a pre-actional mental antecedent (be it the non-spatial will of the dualist or the fully consummated *all-out* judgement of Davidson). Rather, it gets absorbed in a stretch of restrained activities, creating a space of withdrawal exercises. But when one yields to his wishes, this whole phenomenon of yielding is immaculately *one* action which is free; it does not admit of a deterministic or non-deterministic scaffolding between wish, belief, will and action. All phenomenological qualities of wish, will or intention mesh with action, leaving no gaps in the mesh to be or *not* to be filled up by a causal and deterministic mechanism.

This insight that the freedom of choice should not be abstracted from the actual operation of choice was followed up by Ryle in his more explicit and methodical criticism of the dualistic theory of volition.[69] If freedom of choice consists in a special state of feeling, the question arises whether you are free to freely choose your option. And to resist this split between feeling and action and the inevitable insurgence of an infinite regress, Wittgenstein says quite clearly that choice itself is an action (as incorporated in action and not anteceding it). The indeterminist will always try to flare up an antecedent volition, floating in a vacuum, ironically characterised by Wittgenstein as being completely light, without mass, without inertia, without resistance—thus dubiously delinked from the rest of the surroundings. That an agent chooses a particular alternative can be predicted, not in the model of conjuring his identity in the shape of purely mental acts of wish and will and *then* extracting

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[69] Ryle, *Concept of Mind*, chapter 3.

the unique action from it. Let us remind ourselves that for Wittgenstein, volitions never come in the shape of a cause— either a necessitating cause or a non-necessitating (inclining) cause—of the action and ontologically independent of the latter (see sections 2.1, 2.2 and 3, this chapter). His insight that the antecedents of actions have to be seen as themselves being fleshed out or thickening out into a further action is virtually the demand of space not being clotted up in terminal lumps, from which routes to the action are thrown out (deterministically or non-deterministically). Both the determinists and the non-determinists labour under the pressure of these terminal units of space. The non-spatial points (volitions) of the indeterminists that break free from the causal network of space could not disrupt the terminal units of space. For the determinists, the so-called voluntary actions of the indeterminists are actually involuntary movements; the bits of non-spatial volitions enjoyed by the indeterminists are actually reducible to finer bits of space, all causally interconnected. For instance, my volition to jump from a high altitude cannot break through the unbreakable clots of space—the ground underneath, the components of my body, the elements of the intervening air, etc.—but my volition as a bit of non-space is not determined by a spatial network. For the determinist on the other hand, this volition to jump or this seeming bit of non-space is actually reducible to a spatial structure of rigorous causal relations. Now for Wittgenstein, the difference between voluntary and involuntary actions does not lie in the presence of this bit of non-space or the revelation of finer bits of space and unexplored connections among these bits. The distinction lies in what Wittgenstein calls the 'surroundings', or different patterns of relationships to the agent's intentions, attempts and other actions.

Wittgenstein points out some palpable differences in the respective patterns of these two kinds of actions. While one generally stops or starts one's voluntary actions, involuntary actions can only be brought about indirectly through other actions. For instance, one can bring about an involuntary intake

of breath by voluntarily jumping into cold water, one can cause a violent wincing by wounding himself with a pinprick, stop an involuntary eye twitch by closing the eyes, purposely relax one's muscles to stop them from causing other movements. (The last example is given by Wittgenstein himself in *RPP* I 761.) 'There is a particular interplay of movements, words, expressions of face, as of manifestations of reluctance or readiness, which are characteristic of the voluntary movements of a normal human being' (*Z* 594). Besides, voluntary actions like brushing one's teeth, eating, singing, etc., occur in a sequence of actions that is significantly missing from the involuntary actions (*RPP* I 897). Wittgenstein further points out that walking, eating, singing, etc., can be involuntary in some special circumstances, for instance when one is unconscious, or is under narcosis, or is not able to perceive her movements when she shuts her eyes, or cannot adjust her movements in spite of her best efforts (*RPP* I 902). I read Wittgenstein's repeated emphasis on a different 'surrounding', 'atmosphere', 'environment',[70] as constituting involuntary action as a different way of enacting space, marked by a passive resistance. For Wittgenstein, involuntary actions do not bump against lumps of space, but rather activate space through resistance or through succumbing to absence of action. The causal language-game that one can play in the case of an involuntary action cannot be one of ontological blockage of space. Involuntary happenings are like hitting against solid external walls (not limits of space)—where the continuous stretch of a single activity or the varied options of expanding space along various routes are lost. Space comes in staccato jolts, where the routes of negotiating your body in varied directions or the ways of internalising that external space are not available to you. But this is more like a geographical non-navigability, and not geometrical incompatibility. In involuntary actions, parts of our enacted space become geographically delinked from

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[70] Wittgenstein uses the last two expressions in *Manuscript* 130, pp. 122–23, and 150, p. 48. The relevant passages where these expressions occur are cited by Scott, 'Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Action', p. 363.

each other, i.e., parts of that space remain external to our body, whereby epistemological gaps with some spatial routes crop up, and our space is passivated into a jolt. These epistemological gaps coupled with geographical unavailability of some spatial regions is expressed in some reactions as 'I don't know what happened after that'—or 'something compelled the movements of my limbs.' The difference between voluntary and involuntary action turns out to be the difference between navigability and non-navigability of space—both falling within the realm of geography. Absence of geographical navigation too is a kind of space navigation, and the difference between these two modes constitutes the difference between the causal game and the reason game.

And perhaps herein lies the possibility of turning the causal language-game of an involuntary action into the reason game of a voluntary action. Let us pursue this point in a little more detail. I have already noted that to be geographically distanced from certain routes is not to bump against ultimate limiting points of space that constrain our movements within a range of permissible routes barring others, in the same manner that the Tractarean objects get invested with essential qualities that constrain their possible combination within a logical space. We have tried to understand how the purported simplicity of Tractarean objects is simply a referring game that gives meaning to this professed semantic priority only in the light of ongoing exercises of descriptions (see chapter II, especially sections 1.9–1.11). Similarly, spatial blockages that we seem to encounter in our involuntary actions are not ultimate limits of movement; their limiting force is enacted in and through our ongoing exercises of resistance, whether that resistance is defiantly active or haplessly passive. A person thrown down from a high-rise building can turn this involuntary fall of his body into a series of voluntary vaults, or can recast the thick blows inflicted on his body into a lesser intensity, or even revert the direction of these blows back to the perpetrator. Alternatively, as it happens in ordinary cases, a person can succumb to all these injuries in and

through helpless involuntary movements. But in neither case, not even in the latter, does the person encounter the ultimate limits of space as imposing geometrical constraints on his body; rather, these limits are passively activated in his surrender through a fatal dynamism. One is tempted to say that death is not a passive encounter with the terminal units of space, but a way of shaping these purported units bit by bit through an active recoil of life activities.

6. Wittgenstein and Austin on Freedom of Will

Once we see the misconceived ontology of freedom running through the prevalent theories of determinism, indeterminism as well as that of Davidson, we can attempt to read a semantic redressal in both Wittgenstein's and Austin's approaches to freedom. For both of them, 'voluntary' and 'involuntary' do not pick out real features, still less real essences of actions that are mutually exclusive; rather, these two adverbs signify two dimensions of judging actions, or two means of representing or referring to the same. 'Freedom' does not denote a pure and positive essence—a free action is not totally above all possible constraints.

> [T]o say we acted 'freely' … is to say only that we acted *not* un-freely, in one or another of the many heterogeneous ways of so acting (under duress, or what not).… '[F]reedom' is not a name for a characteristic of actions, but the name of a dimension in which actions are assessed.[71]

This is an occasion to repeat once more that for Wittgenstein, 'absolute velocity', 'absolutely perfect measurement', 'perfect length of 'one metre' do not denote positive essences, but their meanings unfold in the actual practices through which the external influences and undesirable distortions are sought to be minimised. Just as judging length or reckoning absolute velocity

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[71] Austin, 'A Plea for Excuses', pp. 382–83.

is never a single compact movement of picking out a one-dimensional segment or an optimal speed at one go, similarly engaging in an action freely is not a single act of generating the action from a single act of volition.

We take actions as naturally successful. It is only when there is a breakdown or the purpose is not realised that excuses are availed of. Various kinds of excuses show various kinds of breakdowns—the various ways in which an action may not be free. The study of excuses thus weans us away from the myth of absolute freedom and explores the various ways in which the volitional and non-volitional elements are meshed together as relevant features for passing moral judgement. And following the main trend of our reference/description narrative, we can say that 'voluntary' versus 'involuntary', 'excusable' versus 'inexcusable', are two means of projecting the referential identity of actions themselves. Measuring the length and measuring the breadth of a table are two dimensions of an exercise with the table. In both successful actions and failed actions, there is a strained exercise of shedding unwanted dimensions or intrusions—and there is no single judgement, 'prima facie' or 'all-out', that can clinch the issue.

This referential identity of the action fleshes itself out either through specific descriptions, or through the material content we gradually bring in, or the specific aspects we choose to highlight. When we lay out such options as 'He could have chosen otherwise,' or 'He could not have chosen otherwise', the latter case is one which we build up as 'He was drunk, alcohol tends to increase the temptation to do certain things colossally, or the circumstances were too difficult, he had a very bad headache and he had to attend to a very tiresome person,' etc. Alternatively, we say that the man did choose to do one thing or the other, he was not forced, therefore he is responsible. Again when we want to withhold moral judgements on his actions we say: 'He didn't give himself weakness or strength,' or 'He did choose to do what he did, but he is not responsible, because the

circumstances are overwhelming.'[72] I present this narrative to demonstrate the recurrent theme (already explained in section 4): in ascribing the adverbs of 'intentional' or 'unintentional' to an action, we are constructing the action in different ways—recasting it against different backdrops, highlighting different phases, giving different quantitative identities—in short, we are picking out different actions. And often the trend of our arguments betrays that our final decision about the action being intentional or unintentional unfolds in the way we let ourselves be converted in the course of our contentions; it boils down to just what we say or pronounce in the long run. 'Look how he has been brought up,' 'He is not strong in character.' … Then I think of myself, 'What would I have done under these circumstances? Of course exactly the same thing.' But I could also have said 'Yes he is a rascal, and so am I, I am to blame and so is he.'[73] These common responses that frequently come up in the course of our lives are supposed to show the difficulty in forging a causal split between the action and intention. Our freedom in engaging in the action is imbued with the description, just as our measuring the table imbibes our description or conception of the table.

Put in a different way, it is the contrastive interplay of uses that gives meaning to 'freedom' and not any special mental antecedent that adds up to a commonly shared extensional identity of the action. For Wittgenstein, freedom is the freedom to do one thing rather than another—it is the contrast between different kinds of voluntary actions and not between voluntary actions and involuntary ones, nor is it a special feeling of emancipation prior to choosing. Suppose someone who is generally living under different constraints utters one day, 'Now I am free to do what I want.' Or again, 'I am like a machine,' as contrasted with 'I am responsible.'[74] It is the entire fabric of

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[72] Wittgenstein, 'Lectures on Freedom of the Will', *Philosophical Occasions*, p. 437.

[73] Ibid., p. 437.

[74] Ibid., p. 439.

the circumstances, the rich details of the backdrop that need to be given to give meaning to such declarations as 'I shall do what I choose myself,' as contrasted with 'I am not a hero,' or 'I am like a falling stone.' It is in a similar vein that we should take Yudhishthira's comments when, after being summoned to the game of dice (on both occasions), he said that the whole universe was at the will of the creator and under the control of fate.[75] His utterance can be paraphrased as: 'It is due to fate or providence that I am destined to lose my kingdom, whether I play or not.' Here again the external machinations of the Kauravas, the pressures of invitations inflicted by a venerable guardian like Dhritarashtra, the prevalent conventions obligating a monarch to accept any invitation to play dice—all these contrasted with a more conducive and uncomplicated scenario that gives meaning to such phrases as 'being under the control of fate', 'providence', 'destiny', 'being under the will of the creator', etc. These expressions do not have any ontological grounding in the shape of a hidden link in the chain as the determinists would like to have it. The grammatically opposite pair of adverbs, viz., 'voluntary' versus 'involuntary', recasts the action under two different identities, with different highlighters and orientations; they do not attach binary alternatives to the same action. Just as 'free action' does not refer to an immaculate act of will, similarly the semantics of 'unfree actions' or 'constrained actions' is not provided by an act of providence or a hidden state of external constraint. There is always a vast labour in the semantic task of referring either to a free or an unfree action.

The statement that one has freedom of will has been noted to be on the same footing with the statement that there is absolute velocity or an absolute substratum lying beneath the qualities. It is just the internal contrasts between different levels of relative velocities, or the juxtaposition of a specific space-time enclosure of an object with its repeatable occurrence in

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[75] *Mahabharata* (ed. V. S. Sukthankara), Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, 1943, 2.51.25, 2.52.14.

a wider framework, that gives sense to the phrases 'absolute velocity' or 'a single material substance' respectively. A similar strategy is that of making a split between an action and its putative mental antecedents, posing several options between universes of desire, invoking logical gaps between alternative universes, projecting one universe as conceptually delinked and anteceding the consequent action. It is these splits (both logical and temporal) constructed at various levels that are projected as the startling discovery that we are free. Like the startling discovery of a hidden neurological link exposing that we are unfree, Davidson was also striving to open up the gaps—the different *prima facie* judgements and an *all-out* judgement— that lead to the declaration that we are free. This is the exercise that Davidson roughly followed in formulating his causal and non-deterministic theory of action, not realising that is not the underdeterminism of the actions by the mental causes but the underdetermination of an action by another. Davidson's model lacked the enriched expanse of the action that is required to ensure its freedom: freedom was again sought to be thinned out in the penultimate cause. In fine, it is again the semantic confusions conjuring separate referential identities for verbs, adverbial modifiers and adverbial antecedents of these verbs that oppressively generate the false ontology of freedom.

What is the exact significance of posing the fixity of character as the foundation of all actions? When we utter platitudes like 'What do you want? He is just this way, his character does not change,' we put up a foundationalist stance of his character being a reservoir that shoots forth predetermined behaviours on appropriate occasions. But we are never able to specify what constitutes this identity of character, just as we are never able to specify what constitutes the character of the ostender delinked from and yet capturing the ostended unfailingly, what constitutes the identity of rules separate from and yet entailing the applications. We are never able to specify what constitutes the natural laws as separate from actions. One would indeed like to posit this fixity of character as a recurrent foundation for

explaining all differences in behaviours. These pronunciations on the fixity of character are not reversible by experience; rather, all recalcitrant experiences are adjusted to suit the fixity of character. That is why we argue: 'When something arises in two years' time, his character not having changed, he acts differently. He just acts differently, to put up a stance, but actually he is what he is!' (The same anxiety for preserving foundations operates in the realm of mathematics: when the rule '2 + 2 = 4' faces resistances from liquid drops, in order to keep its irreversible status, it expresses itself differently by projecting the drops as coalesced into one and yet retaining their separable identity underneath.) Thus, here again the semantic issue of reference comes up—this time as the fixed identity of the character separate from and yet shooting forth all actions. It is not a matter of scientific discovery that if we hit upon a neural state that shows the hidden connexion between an act and its antecedent, then we have solved the philosophical problem of determinism. And it is not that if we have *not* found that hidden connexion, then we are left with the option of admitting indeterminism. Ironically, it works in the reverse way—it is our empirical investigation and discovery that fall back on the prop of determinism or indeterminism, just as any empirical investigation into whether two and two makes four is actually based on this postulate itself. The issue of freedom is not a matter of scientific discovery—rather it is the prop that we fall back on in our scientific discoveries. It is not that to which we direct our attention, but that which stays invariantly behind our direction of attention.[76]

Wittgenstein comes up with more surprises, opening up more perspectives to turn the polemics of determinism versus indeterminism in newer directions. He argues that even when one formulates the laws under which the future action is predicted to come true, the further exercise of matching the prediction with the action—in both the first person and the third person case—

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[76] Wittgenstein, 'Lectures on Freedom of the Will, *Philosophical Occasions*, p. 440.

will be possible. And this obviously will show that determinism is not true.

Wittgenstein takes cases where we do predict our actions to find that we act according to those predictions. One can conceive three variations of this predictive game: (1) I predict that I will be acting in such and such ways, and remember my prediction while doing that action. Yudhishthira's self-prediction that he would accept Dhritarashtra's instruction to play the game of dice and his remembering it on the actual occasion is a case in point. The situation is like this: Yudhishthira knew that he as a monarch could not refuse an invitation to play dice; he knew that he himself could not play dice well, and that some organised conspiracy was going on. (2) I predict that I shall do *phi* but do not remember when in future I actually come to do it. (3) There may be another kind of occasion where I read someone else's prediction of my future action as matching with my actual performance. This may be the case of Oedipus, who came to know the two lethal predictions about his future in his early youth. Now here Wittgenstein would make two comments: First, remembering is not hauling up a mental state from the depths of space in the reverse direction; remembering is rather a language-game (see chapter III, section 1.3). Secondly, matching the previous predictions with one's future actions (whether those predictions were mine or of a third person) is not treading a path already laid down in reality, it is not a revelation of the actual implementation of a prophecy. Matching a prediction is not tracing out a line of foundational determinism any more than the act of reading a novel and applying it to our life. The lines of application of the novel are not laid down in the novel, they are a new construction, and this is itself a free exercise. For Wittgenstein, Oedipus would be free to match the prediction with his actual life along alternative routes—i.e., he would be free to deny the single and unique path laid down in the prediction. He would be free to claim that *had* he not been living with foster parents from his infancy, taking them to be his real parents, these disastrous incidents of mistaking

the identities of his real parents (King Laius and Queen Jocasta) and eventually destroying them would never have happened. He would be *free* to deny a murderous instinct and a sexual inclination being present as two empty slots in his character, slots that were inertly waiting for the two unique and alien values—Laius and Jocasta—to fall into their respective holes. Alternatively, Oedipus can *freely* conform to the duly expected path of reverentially accepting the validity of the predictions, which, as the protagonist of the play, he actually does.

One may object that what Wittgenstein has been trying to demonstrate is that deliberation and the act of choosing are conceptually independent of each other, so that one is free to match them in the relation of determinism or otherwise. Incidentally, this is what Davidson has said in favour of his causal theory and against reason theory (see section 1.1 of this chapter). But the determinists would object that here the illusion of freedom or of the conceptual gap between the prediction and the action is due to ignorance; we do not know the natural laws that are really at work to compel my actual choice; the process of my own deliberations and the other factors that come within the purview of my knowledge do not include the crucial range of mental determinants.

Wittgenstein would retort that these natural laws that are patently unknown are at least logically available to our knowledge. The natural laws are not out there independent of their being cognised and of being matched with their application; they determine our actions *ordo cognoscendi* and not *ordo essendi*. To be determinants of our actions, they have to be *known* by us. And Wittgenstein seems to move to the stronger option of admitting that the knowledge of natural determinants leaves out the space for the further exercise of matching them with the action and seeing them *as* determinants. Wittgenstein says that even after an accurate and informed prediction that on such a future occasion Moore and he would play roulette, they would engage in the further deliberation about playing and actually indulging in the game. (Even after a prediction

that one would get into a harmful or clandestine liaison at a predicted time, one would still get into that actual relation on the appropriate occasion fully knowing that it has been predicted or is predictable. Now here there are two options: (a) We desist from the action after it has been predicted, in which case we are free; (b) We could still perform the predicted action whereby we shall be exercising the choice of matching the determinant with the determined. So the crux of the above argument is that the natural laws that are determinants of our future actions are in principle available to the knowledge of the agent, thus demonstrating her freedom to do or to desist from the action; in both cases, the action would turn out to be free.

The determinist can indeed say that if the laws are known by the agent, then the totality of antecedent conditions will be different and hence would determine the agent's action differently. Then the seeming freedom of the agent's performing the action as a defiant resistance against any moral force of the prediction, or as a voluntary withdrawal of the action, is actually determined by the newly gained knowledge of the natural laws. But such a defence cannot sustain itself—for Wittgenstein can again question whether this newly enriched natural law is logically available to the knowledge of the agent. If it is, then the determinist again reaches the same impasse, and if the laws are logically inaccessible to the agent, the theory of determinism turns out to be arbitrary.

7. Sexual Acts: The Reference/Description Dichotomy and Freedom

All these specific insights about the volitional modifiers of action may be heightened with respect to erotic or sexual actions. Seeing a human body erotically, having nervous impulses, muscle contraction, experiencing erection, orgasm, performing the actual sex act, etc.—these items are not caught in a causal or deterministic mechanism, where one item antecedes and determines the next in an uncontrollable flow. Rather, all these

elements are meshed in a single whole—a single action which one is free to perform or not perform. Indeed, the unmistakably conceptual character of sexual experiences is evident from the fact that one needs to consciously construct and plan his sexual experiences right from the foreplay progressively to the subsequent phases to ensure the final output. The common experience that one partner may lose interest and concentration at any stage clearly shows that our sexual experiences and acts do not have the imposing character of the reflexive responses to a violent stab of light or a hard blow. But what I want to highlight is that the freedom of choice obtains not only between letting one phase of the entire act lead on to the subsequent phase or preventing it; but more significantly in recasting any of the phases in an entirely different mould—to see it in an entirely different aspect and thus embedding it in a radically different action. Seeing or sensing a human body is a loaded conceptual construct, where all principles of conceptual operation, as pointed out by McDowell,[77] are operative.

I seek to consolidate this point—not at one go, but gradually—on the Quinean and Davidsonian tracks that would read sexual experience as conceptual, and sex acts not as involuntary or instinctive. However, I shall argue that these readings will ironically push us back to the non-conceptual character of sex—a conclusion that I am seeking to avoid. The ineffectivity of the Quinean or Davidsonian schemes will hopefully lead us to the desired conclusion with greater conviction.

First I shall try to frame sexual experience and sexual acts in terms of Quine's theory of relativism and indeterminacy. Given the fact that Quine never articulated his theory in terms of tactual experience, still less that of a sexual nature, this will require a somewhat strained effort. Let me try to chalk out the way in which we can possibly go about this task. Quine's way of attacking the self-interpretivity of sense-experience seems to

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[77] McDowell, *Mind and World*. This point has already been discussed in sections 2.1 and 2.2 of the previous chapter.

work in two aspects. In one aspect, it insists more on a kind of epistemological relativism, whereby no statement can either be accorded the status of being germane to a particular experience, or be said to be true irrespective of all experience. The totality of our so-called knowledge and belief is a 'man-made fabric' which impinges on our senses only at the boundaries. But the total field being undetermined by the boundary conditions, any recalcitrant experience leaves a wide latitude of reshuffling the dominant scheme by redistributing the truth-values of its components. It is the patent claim of Quine that any statement can be retained as true in the face of recalcitrant experience, and any statement can be rejected as false in spite of all the strength of supportive experiences, provided we make necessary adjustments with the other statements of the scheme.[78] The second aspect of Quine's theory harps more on the semantic issue—i.e., on the question of how much meaning can be geared to a purely given sensory stimulus unencumbered by the conceptual interventions and belief schemes.[79] And here he shows that except for certain observation sentences like 'Red,' the supposedly immaculate core of stimulation patterns is always invaded by collateral information, to an extent where the distinction between the core stimulus and the collateral information becomes illusory.[80] Quine showed that even in two sentences, viz., 'Gavagai' and 'Rabbit,' that seemed to be triggered off by the same set of stimulation patterns, the first sentence may actually have a different set of meanings—like the rabbit-part, or time-slices of rabbits, or rabbit-universal, or the single but discontinuous part of the universe containing rabbits, and so on. Now what is insisted against Quine's ingenious attempts to break the dogmatised transparency of experience is that, in order to compute the ways in which a stimulation pattern is relativised to a conceptual scheme, he has already fixed on the semantic transparency of

[78] Quine, 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism'.

[79] Quine, *Word and Object*, chapter II.

[80] Ibid., pp. 35–40.

the given stimulus. It is this veiled admission of the semantic identity of what is officially claimed to be irreferable and inscrutable that enables Quine to project an epistemological or semantic indeterminacy, otherwise he could not have shown how the purported synonymies between each sentence and its corresponding set of observation sentences is dependent on a particular scheme of beliefs and thus displaceable by a different set. Without a tacit admission of a core of stimulus-meaning, Quine could not also have projected the various ways in which the core is invaded by the margin. Without a commitment to an uninterpreted beginning point, one cannot possibly understand how different modes of interpretation are foisted on the former.

Let this account serve as sufficient stage-setting for launching a Quinean construction of sexual experiences. Obviously, our first problem in such an exercise pertains to the fact that sex is patently an experience or action, and not like a physical object like a table or a rabbit. This should lead us to venture to see whether sexual experiences come in the shape of identifiable stimulus-patterns, which in their turn can be examined in terms of their capacity to determine or underdetermine our full-fledged sentences about sexual experiences and sexual actions. Instead of 'Rabbit', let us start with the word 'Orgasm' to see whether this can be deployed in a scheme of conceptual relativism or semantic indeterminacy. Can this be regarded as an occasion sentence geared to a given stimulation-pattern? We have a much easier way to show that it is not, easier than the field linguists' experiments with the radical translation of the native jungle sentences. This is amply clear from the fact that the purported definitions of all the crucial terms pertaining to sexual phenomena—say 'orgasm'—are circular; they are never able to substitute the word 'sex' in terms neutralised of sexual connotations. We can cite the following definition of 'orgasm': 'the sudden discharge of accumulated *sexual* excitement during the *sexual* response cycle resulting in a rhythmic muscular contraction in the pelvic region characterised by *sexual* pleasure'

(italics mine).[81] The sexual response cycle in its turn is defined as a four-stage model of physiological response to sexual stimulation, including the excitement phase, plateau phase, orgasmic phase and resolution phase. The excitement phase is characterised as being generated from physical or mental *erotic* stimuli (kissing, petting, having *erotic* images). The plateau phase is said to be the period of *sexual* excitement prior to orgasm, characterised by increased circulation and heart rate in both sexes, increased *sexual* pleasure with increased stimulation.[82] Indeed, when the term 'orgasm' is sought to be defined with the stance of sexually neutral terms borrowed from physiology—i.e., in terms of contraction, withdrawal, swelling, brightening, reduction of size, ejection, convulsion, contraction, lubrication, ejaculation, etc., pertaining to muscles, tissues and glands—however complete this narration may attempt to be, it cannot dispense with terms having sexual overtones. Similar remarks would apply to the definition of the 'resolution phase'—in terms of relaxation of muscles, dropping of blood pressure—for none of these movements can shirk off the crucial nuance, viz., 'slowing down of sexual excitement'.

It is interesting to note that whether we read the above definitions as synonymy definitions or as causal definitions— the first substituting sexual terms in terms of non-sexual ones, and the second giving an account of how sexual acts are *caused* in phases—both are blatantly circular. This reveals an important insight. The attempt to turn sexual acts into involuntary acts causally determined by physiological occurrences or unconscious intentions and instincts which the agents themselves may be ignorant about is just an attempt to turn the reason game of sexuality into a causal game, the latter being typically projected as deterministic, unintentional and filled with yawning epistemological gaps. Such an attempt to turn one game into

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[81] I have drawn the relevant details about the notions of orgasm and sexual response cycle from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orgasm (accessed 30 November 2017).

[82] Ibid.; italics mine.

the other is what we see in the above definition of 'sexual response cycle'—purportedly a causal cycle where each phase is supposed to be external and independent of the other, and yet each phase borrows notionally from the others. All this shows that any attempt to read sexual experiences as based on a given stimulation-content is invalid; for every effort to eke out that pre-conceptual content of sex, right from the very first stage of its being triggered off by some typically erotic experiences, betrays this 'given' stimulus as already loaded with heavily 'sexed' connotations.

Further, there are some controversies as to whether male orgasm is to be regarded as identical with ejaculation, or whether the former is to be held as being caused by the latter. The equational theory, which claims that men are capable of having multiple orgasms, has two versions. The first version seems to equate the number of orgasms with the number of convulsions (in ejaculation), and the second version claims that men have orgasm without ejaculation (i.e., dry orgasms). Now one can legitimately observe that had sexual acts been involuntary or instinctive—triggered off by a non-conceptual sense-stimulation, where each phase leads to the other in a rigorously demarcated structure—there would not have been such controversies regarding the very identity of a phase, or as to whether the purported antecedent actually coalesces with the consequent. Nor would there have been a disagreement about whether men can have multiple orgasms, whether they have the power to lead the first orgasm to the second, the second to the third, and so on. Thus, orgasms are not *given* pre-conceptually as numbered items which may be subitised, nor is the *concept* of orgasm so transparent as to determine a fixed number of its instantiations. Rather, the controversy regarding the *number* of orgasms shows that there are many modes of reading its qualitative and quantitative identity, a fact that entails considerable indeterminacy as to the number of its instantiations.

The objective of the entire foregoing exercise is clear enough—in order to press home the conceptually loaded character and the in-built autonomy of the sexual act, we need a more radical tool than that provided by Quine's theory of stimulus-meaning as underdetermining the meaning of occasion sentences. The crucial point that I wish to emphasise is this: if Quine attempted to show that the meanings of sentences in a sexual discourse are underdetermined by the stimulus-meaning and are invaded by a scheme of beliefs or concepts, he would ironically be admitting an already 'sexed' interpretation of stimulus-meaning, and cannot possibly demonstrate how it underdetermines the meaning of the full-fledged propositions about sexual experience and the larger discourse of sexuality.

Quine's theory, as already pointed out, has another aspect, which focuses not so much on semantic indeterminacy but on epistemological relativism, i.e., the relativity of the truth-values of propositions across different schemes. Under this aspect too, any purported equation between a statement about a sexual experience (say about orgasm itself) on the one hand, and a unique set of observation sentences on the other, would be subjected to the network of beliefs in which it is ensconced; but under this aspect, the focus would be on the truth-value of the statements about sex, and not only on the question of their meaning. To take a simple instance: the truth of such an innocuous statement as 'This tree has a brown trunk and a green foliage' can be falsified even in the face of strongly confirming experiences, for the simple reason that its purported synonymy with a set pattern of stimulations or a set of observation sentences can itself be displaced by making necessary changes in our standard theories of human physiology, the theories of light propagation, the nature of intervening media, the nature of rods and cones in our eyes, etc. Similarly, the purported truth of a sentence like 'I have an orgasm' or 'This is an erotic experience' can be falsified even in the face of the so-called barrage of confirming stimulations, provided we make the necessary adjustments in the dominant physiological theories about our muscles, tissues, nerves and skin cells.

It is not only sentences purporting to talk about physical happenings like contraction of muscles or tissues, lubrication or ejaculation that can be questioned, but even the veracity of the content of *experience*; i.e., the apparent eroticity or sexual dimension of the experience can be nullified. Just as one may be so thoroughly programmed or traumatised as to experience ice balls shoved down our throat as fireballs, or, generally speaking, be conditioned to experience a pleasure-stimulus as a pain-stimulus, one may even be programmed to perceive sexual experiences as non-veridical or as illusions, and vice versa. Studies on bodily awareness report phenomena like the rubber hand illusion, where if one looks at a rubber hand while one's own hand is hidden, and both the rubber and the real hands are synchronously stroked, one mislocates one's own hand toward the rubber hand.[83] One can perhaps easily conceive how similar illusions can be generated with a rubber penis placed in the location of the real penis, hiding the latter. Now whether or not we choose to impress ourselves with this Quinean construction of epistemological and semantic indeterminacy of sexual experiences and sexual discourse, one thing is clear. These strategies of construction are themselves founded on a semantic transparency of sexual experience and sexual language, and hence we need a different strategy to deconstruct the putative self-interpretivity of the sexual.

Let us take a brief look at the prevalent controversies on the phenomenon of female orgasm. According to one set of theories, female orgasm is achieved by direct or indirect clitoral stimulation. The clitoris is said to have as many nerve endings as the penis, and the former being homologous with the penis, these nerves are said to be equivalent in their capacity to receive sexual stimulation. This theory gained popularity with the dominant belief that most parts of the vagina have significantly fewer nerve endings than the clitoris. However, it was claimed that

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[83] http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/bodily-awareness/ (accessed 30 November 2017).

there is an area called the G-spot running along the roof of the vagina that can feel sexual pleasure, though not orgasm. There are other theories, like that of Freud, which insist on the G-spot orgasm as the paradigmatic experience of an adult woman, as contrasted with the clitoral sensations of female adolescents. While the clitoral orgasm theory based on the homology between the clitoris and the penis might have been motivated by the logico-mathematical ideals of analytic philosophy, the vaginal orgasm theory might have been inspired by a 'male' construct of the vagina as being the unique and paradigmatic sex organ of the female. These conjectures are irrelevant to our project; what we need to see is how this dichotomy between the two models of female orgasm—one insisting on the G-spot as a well-characterised entity and the other claiming it to be virtually non-existent—was dissolved into an enactive theory of sexual experience which is more conducive to our approach. These theories claimed that the clitoris and the vagina are spatially connected—the clitoral tissues extend to the anterior walls of the vagina, and women may be able to achieve vaginal orgasm via the skin of the G-spot, because the highly innervated clitoris is pulled closely towards to the anterior walls of the vagina during the phase of arousal and vaginal intercourse. This new trend of investigating a hitherto undiscovered connection between the vagina and the clitoris culminated in a genuinely philosophical insight: the G-spot is a region, a convergence of many structures; it is not an isolated chunk of a thing, just as New York is not a thing. It may be added that the so-called G-spot is not a structure laid down *in* space: it is not that the stimulation of one spot passively and involuntarily leads on to another spot because the spots are already laid out as fillers of an empty spatial framework given out there. Rather, it is a structure that women voluntarily carve out in their sexual activities, making smaller spaces burst forth into larger spaces. So when the supporters of the clitoral model suggest that the satisfaction derived from penile penetration is mainly psychological and a result of 'referred sensation', we must note that it is not the clitoris as contrasted with the G-spot

of the vagina that is the *real reference* of sexual language, the reference which the woman happens to transfer erroneously to the vagina. Rather, such phenomena are to be read as women voluntarily enacting their sexual references into an expansive network where the putatively discrete identities (privileged spots or specific organs) are inextricably entwined with each other.

We know that for Davidson a pre-conceptual stimulus-content cannot be allowed to stay outside the conceptual scheme and yet be schematised by the latter.[84] As for the status of a sexual act, we can legitimately take him as reckoning it to be an intensional ascription to a neutral event that would admit of other alternative (non-sexual) descriptions. Further, Davidson would surely consider the sexual act—like all voluntary acts—as being caused in an intensional and non-nomological fashion, and thus appreciably different from the determinist theories—i.e., different from the nomological and extensional model of causation whereby sexual activities are strictly determined by blind and brute anatomy and physiology, independent of the agent's conception and cognition. But Davidson's theory would still labour under the following foundationalist pitfalls: (*a*) both first-person agency and third-person interpretation of voluntary actions in general and sexual actions in particular are sparked off—causally and non-conceptually—by the physical object (the human body with its organisation of muscles and tissues in this particular case); (*b*) the act itself is grafted on a bare event with a space-time outline; (*c*) as McDowell pointed out, the theory thrives on a mythical dichotomy between sensibility and concepts, or norm and nature, whereby sensing the human body, being acted on by it, the capacity to move one's sense organs and motor organs all fall within the realm of primal and receptive nature, while the self-generating spontaneity of conception and volition is left outside like a wheel spinning freely in a vacuum. Davidson despite his sophisticated tools for

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[84] Donald Davidson, 'On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme', in *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).

carving out a non-deterministic and yet causal theory of action, comes to share a common folly with the determinists—the notion of an external and inert space, and the false dichotomy of reference and description, where the action is supposed to enjoy a purely referential identity independent of its descriptions running identically through both its volitional or non-volitional modalities. Even Davidson's theory of non-nomological and intensional causation, in so far as it admits a split between the action and its causal antecedent, is not able to prevent male chauvinists, sex maniacs and rapists gaining mileage from the determinist theory of causation of a nomological and extensional character. How would Davidson handle acts of uttering clichés like 'I have no control over my action,' 'My penis is my monarch,' 'Whenever I see or touch a woman's body I have such and such reactions absolutely determined, I have no cognisance of the internal happenings,' etc.? Such escape routes, used conveniently by both theoreticians and common people, are culpable of not only a moral error but also an intellectual error, which only an anti-foundationalist philosophy of language can address. We should appreciate that using such a causal model with a projection of epistemological gaps within the process is just a language-game with no external reality constraints of objects and events, either figuring as a referent or as a pure pre-linguistic entity underlying both reference and description. And Davidson perhaps was a bit far from realising that admission of a neutral body and bodily events outlined by a neat non-descriptional space-time boundary underlying the sexual actions itself presupposes an erotic construction of the body. To repeat our point in more concrete terms, a reduction of the sex act into flat, homogeneously repetitive, clockable moments, as contrasted with a dynamic thickening out of each phase into the next—these are not two options both of which hark back to a given quantity of space-time which you can describe in one way or other. Rather, these options show how our actions themselves create different modes of sexualities or neutralise them by carving out different quantitative identities of body and bodily behaviours.

That the sexual instinct, like all other instincts, is conceptual in nature is evident from the way it develops. Instincts are not stereotyped or fixed in nature, they *conceptually* transit from one object to another—like the chick's instinctive movement to follow a moving object is transferred to her moving mother. Similarly, our sexual instincts to caress undulations, the ups and downs of a tactual surface, transits from our pillows, tables, seeds, to our bodies and undulations of others' bodies, all occurring in a conceptual fashion. All this shows a slight variation from what McDowell says: our sexual nature embeds our conceptual operations in a way that there is no notionally separate concept independent of our nature. In other words, there are no antecedent happenings in our body—the neural firings, the muscle contractions or pre-conceptual sensations that causally determine our sexual experiences and activities; rather, these happenings are tantamount to the latter. 'His guilt lies in the very fact that he chose in the way which seems so natural.'[85]

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It emerges that action-words do not admit of a neat reference/description divide, still less do actions permit separate ontologies of a bare non-descriptional event, or a primary intention—as a referent of action-words—on which alternative and secondary intentions are ascribed as actional counterparts of meaning or sense, so to speak. All the lines of Wittgensteinian critique against the internalist and externalist theories of reference—viz., the semantic opacity of sense, the essentially essenceless or enactive character of the putative blocks of referents—have been argued to be operative with respect to actions as well action-words. But our crucial contention against Davidson's claim of a bare event outlined by a space-time container needs a more rigorous and extensive treatment, inviting Wittgenstein's analysis of space

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[85] Wittgenstein, 'Lectures on Freedom of the Will', *Philosophical Occasions*, p. 436. In this case let us presume the guilt of a wrong sexual act.

and time in contrast with the major philosophical stands on
this issue. The next chapter seeks to synthesise the apparently
different strands—viz., the semantic notions of reference and
description, the ontologies of objects, actions and events—
within the single rubric of space and time, constructed or rather
deconstructed from an anti-foundationalist perspective.

Rereading Wittgenstein's View of Action in Terms of Space and Time

All through the preceding chapters, the engagement with Wittgenstein's view of reference has capitalised on an enactive construction of space, according to which referential activity does not happen *in* space, but itself creates space by breaking, bending and blending objects into their mutual relations. This narrative requires a more extensive and rigorous exercise of setting off Wittgenstein's view of space-time against the official physicist theories endorsed by Newton and Einstein—or rather, against their philosophical counterparts. This enriched backdrop will better equip us to refute Davidson's theory of an event with a bare space-time outline underlying various intensions, against which the agent is supposed to bump his head in a pre-conceptual manner. It may be noted that while I had indeed dwelt at length (in chapter III) upon Roger Jones's reading of Einstein's space to work out a fruitful comparison with Wittgenstein, and have argued on several occasions as to how Wittgenstein outgrew the models of both Newton and Einstein, the style of my engagement has been mainly illustrative and focused on Wittgenstein himself. I have not yet opened up common framework of idioms to activate valid tracks of comparison and contrast, agreements and dissensions, prior to which one cannot legitimately ascribe an irreducible originality to Wittgenstein's insights on the notion of space-time. This I shall do in this penultimate chapter, in the following four sections.

Since Davidson's view of event as a space-time outline of actions is dominantly couched in terms of a containment model, the first section looks into Newton's theory of space and time, especially in its philosophical aspect. Here I shall be dealing with Wittgenstein's analysis of the surface grammar of statements on space—the grammar that fashions the misleading ontology of space as a substantive container, incorporeal and invisible in nature.

The second section makes a brief entry into Russell's theory of matter, space and time, which is impressively different from that of Newton: working against one all-pervading space-time container housing well-defined objects with neat and respectable boundaries. For Russell, the single material substance is shown to dissipate into innumerable sense-data, each of which is situated in a unique private space. However, I shall argue that Russell's scheme of constructing the single material substance in a universal space-time from discrete and momentary sense-data is ultimately framed in the containment idiom. Overall, Russell's theory also fuels the prevalent tendency to conform to the traditional ontology of actions as trailing behind pre-given objects and events. I shall try to press the view that though for Russell, matter, space and time are not given but constructed, the principles of construction fall back on their veiled givenness.

Russell's theory of the given versus the constructed, or private versus public space-time, invites a comparison in the third section of this chapter with Wittgenstein's distinction between the private and the public. This exercise will draw substantially upon Jakko Hintikka's important commentary on Wittgenstein's notion of time.[1] I shall argue that Hintikka is not able to appreciate fully the significance of Wittgenstein's distinction between private time, perspectival time and public time; he unduly places them on the same footing with Einstein's problem of integrating local times within the framework of a universal time—the theme of the special theory of relativity.

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[1] Hintikka, 'Wittgenstein on Being and Time'.

In the fourth section, I shall examine whether and how Wittgenstein's notion of space and time outgrows the Einsteinian model, or at least the philosophical version of the same, defying its semantic requirement of public time geared to the absolute velocity of light and a uniform numerical system of measurement. I shall attempt to show that Wittgenstein's view on space and time defies the Newtonian containment model on the one hand, and the Einsteinian scheme of time moving as a one-dimensional vertical axis of space in a uniformly clockable structure of milliseconds on the other.

Wittgenstein's crucial claim about the primacy of action cannot be fully sustained unless we are able to consolidate the enactive view of perception—the view that action *constitutes* perception, and is not merely a causal correlate of the latter. A comprehensive reinstatement of this enactive view, addressed at length at various junctures in this work (chapter II, section 3; chapter III, sections 1.4, 2.1, 2.4, 3; chapter IV), will now be effectively projected as the neat exit point of this entire project. I shall however concentrate mainly on the phenomenon of enacting colour, chiefly because the previous engagements with actions in this study were in terms of enacting the so-called things or substances, or visual and (occasionally) tactual perception in general. In the official scenario of reference, colour and pain project themselves with an irresistible force as being the ideal candidates for the privileged position of referents—as the only genuine bits of reality capable of being picked out independently of all conception and construction. I have sought to cover pain, or rather the phenomenon of enacting pain, under the elaborate account in chapter III as to how privacy for Wittgenstein's is played out as a special game of referring. Relieving colour of its typically pre-actional or pre-enactive status can take this long tour—this long quest for reference—towards a colourfully climatic finish.

1. Wittgenstein's Grammatical Analysis of Newtonian Statements on Space

As already mentioned, Davidson's admission of an event underlying actions and couched in the model of containment may be effectively addressed by a Wittgensteinian treatment of the surface grammar of Newtonian statements on space. Before that, let us examine the crux of Newton's theory of space.[2] Space has to be given the status of a special kind of substance, with special properties like being immobile, immutable, intangible, invisible, stretching out limitlessly in length, breadth and depth. Space persists even after the dissolution of all objects therein. Newton makes a distinction between absolute and relative space. We can determine the dimensions of a subterraneous, aerial or celestial space by its relative position to earth, for the latter provides a relative frame of reference. While this relative space will collapse with the collapse of the earth, absolute space, as immutable and homogeneous, will remain as the absolute frame of reference.

The set of features that Newton ascribes to space leads to two directions of thought:

(1) Space is an object: it has changeable size, shape, is observable with observable properties, is a medium and a container. These features mostly pertain to relative space.
(2) All these different characteristics are pervaded by the dominant metaphor of containment—the crucial and controversial predicate also supposed to apply to absolute space.

Let us now peruse the superficial grammatical resemblances between propositions about space and propositions about objects. Space as objects has the following characteristics:

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[2] I draw substantially upon James E. Broyle, 'Talk about Space: Wittgenstein and Newton', *Philosophical Investigations*, vol. 4, no. 4 (Fall 1981), pp. 45–55, for this section.

(a) Space has a history: The space (fungus) appeared last spring.
(b) Space has changeable size and shape: The space (playground) that was round has been enlarged and made into a square.
(c) Space as observable property/properties: I can feel the space (scar) left by its removal.
(d) Space itself is a location and is spatially related with other objects: A space (an alley) separates the two buildings.
(e) Space can be navigated: He looked through space; He stepped through the space (door).

Let us follow Wittgenstein and Broyle to understand how the surface grammar of 'space' generates the illusion of objects as 'swelling out into a depthless surface that covers them like an elusive husk. As Wittgenstein points out, while in all cases the word 'space' assumes the role of a substantive occupying the subject-position, the legitimate ways in which one can operate with an object-term do not apply to space-terms. To consider the following pair of sentences:

(a) He has a space between his teeth.
(b) He has spinach between his teeth.

The questions raised about (b)-type examples pertain to spinach or any other possible object looking like spinach, while questions about (a)-type examples pertain to the location, distance and configuration of physical objects. One can eliminate the spinach, but talk of eliminating the space between the teeth would make sense either in terms of removing the intermediary teeth or setting new ones there. Similarly, one can change the hook for a hat by putting other hooks in its place, but to change the 'space' for a hat would be rather to hang it on a different stand with a different peg, or to change the configuration of pegs or to put other pegs in between. This difference in depth grammar shows that it would be a category mistake to deem space as an object possessing a set of properties. To take a further pair of illustrations that conflate the grammar of a medium

with that of space: (*a*) The balloon floated in space; and (*b*) We looked through space (mist) and saw the moon. Again, the set of questions that can be raised about the air molecules through which the balloon floats cannot be raised about the space itself.

In the second chapter (section 1.6), a similar exercise was carried out to expose the discrepancies between the surface grammar and depth grammar of the expressions 'understanding' and 'meaning'. While surface grammar places all expressions with superficial resemblances, like 'sleeping', 'eating', 'walking', meaning', understanding', etc., under the same part of speech, viz., that of a verb, or a state with a definite duration, philosophical grammar takes note of the varied expanse of uses of these expressions and accordingly places meaning and understanding in a separate grammatical category of a non-episodic concept having no definite origin or duration. While it indeed makes sense to ask about the time one started eating or walking, it does not always make sense to raise similar queries about meaning and understanding. It is a flawed assimilation of the grammars of 'understanding' and 'meaning' with that of eating that generates the ontology of meaning and understanding not only as clockable processes, but also as having a spatial coincidence with a supposedly extra-linguistic reality that figures as the *object* of understanding. The discrepancy between the surface grammar and philosophical grammar of 'meaning' and 'understanding' surfaces in the disanalogy between the respective uses of 'eating' and 'understanding': the expression 'eating half a loaf' is meaningful, while 'understanding or meaning half a proposition' is not. So neither the proposition nor the reality pre-exists understanding in the manner of two spatial chunks pre-existing their spatial coincidence.

Two levels of confusion are operative here:

(1) The surface analogy between statements about space and those about objects generates the illusion of an ethereal container, shared, say, by the pyramid and the prism.

(2) Swayed by this spatial imagery, all the different occurrences

of the verb 'to be' (the 'is' of identity, the 'is' of class membership, and the 'is' of class inclusion) are supposed to share a common 'meaning-body'.

Further, the illusion of space as a medium generates the myth of the transcendental 'I'. Once we get swayed by the illusion of space as a medium, we soon get trapped in the idea of space being transparent, incapable of being blurred/obscured/obfuscated (in the manner that the moon is blurred by the mist). Thus, space becomes like the subject—the irreducible 'I' that always spills out as an ever-uncashable residue. The more we try to encash it in terms of its content, it recedes like an ever-elusive wall. It recedes forever as the absolute frame of reference that underlies all actual and possible descriptions. Space recedes forever as the absolute frame of reference that underlies all actual and possible descriptions. Lucretius is reported to argue that if the composite things contain a vacuum, then the surrounding matter must be solid; and on this analogy, if space is to contain or hide a vacuum in its body, as a container it must be solid. This may be compared with the typical enunciation of logical atomism—that a logically proper name which is a genuine referrer cannot be negated, for it must stay behind the predicate as the impredicable to make negation possible. One feels tempted to say that the ultimate referent that always escapes description actually boils down to the spatial outline of the object. Indeed, Newton speaks in terms of reference as every object 'referring to' or 'identifying' the space which it occupies. Properties *qua* properties cannot be referred but only described, and the spatial container always spilling out of the object as its occult invisible surrounding presents itself as the ideal candidate for reference.

Newton views geometrical shape as the corporeal representation of something incorporeal. He thinks that all geometrical shapes and figures have their being as ideal containers; hence any material delineation of a figure is not a new prediction thereof, but is rather a corporeal representation of something incorporeal and insensible.

One sees that in Davidson's scheme, actions tend to assume the status of some corporeal representation of some incorporeal husk termed as events. Let us recall the trend of Davidson's analysis regarding the criterion of events—action-events or physical movements in particular (chapter IV, section 1.7). Davidson's talk of identifying the location of an event in an indivisible moment or in the smallest location in space seems to labour under the assumption of pre-given slots of space and time as ethereal containers ready to receive events. Besides his preoccupation with the need for framing new conventions for re-describing events so that one can decide on their time slots, his worries about the epistemological gaps in measuring the precise location and duration show that he was not willing to address the crucial point as to how these putative space-time slots are themselves ruptured by sheer qualitative excess. In identifying two physical movements of a human as the same action despite their different descriptions, we do not learn to place them in a pre-given husk of space-time; rather, we learn to blend or break space-time into the same or a different object respectively. Rather, in the present context, we learn to blend and break our actions into sameness or difference in and through our actions. The accordion metaphor used by Davidson tempts us to push the analogy between him and Newton in an exciting direction—as Newton thrusts a corporeal object, say a beach ball, into incorporeal space, Davidson too thrusts action into an empty, invisible space-time husk, which he calls an 'event'.[3] It even seems that he recasts Feinberg's accordion model into a Newtonian scheme, asking us to note in triumph how the incorporeal outline of the accordion fits all its shapes and sizes—all its possible dimensions of expansion and condensation.[4]

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[3] Incidentally, it may be recalled how Raftopoulos, discussed in chapter III, too seems to entertain the same myth of a space-time husk in the shape of 2.5D objects figuring as the non-conceptual basis of conceptual recursion.

[4] See Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events*, Essay 3 for his treatment of the accordion analogy.

One is irresistibly tempted to draw up a picturesque analogy with Wittgenstein's treatment of identity-statements as thriving on the containment imagery of space. Wittgenstein looks upon apparently static and dysfunctional identity-statements like 'P = P' and 'Every rod has a length' as an imaginative operation of a spatial outline fitting its content—like a thing coming out of its slot and reverting back into it. Again, in this way, space as a container readily poses as the minimal extensional identity underlying the varied descriptions or intensional ascriptions to actions.

Let us note that the grammatical mystification effected by the statements on space occurs at two levels: At the first level there are several space-containers, and at the second level these several spaces merge into one. 'All objects are in space' is a grammatical statement which is different from the corresponding empirical statement, 'All toys are in a box.' The grammatical statement provides a paradigm of describing the toys in terms of their spatial location, as contrasted with their colour or number. It floats a criterion to envisage neatly bound objects as contained in a clean space safely distanced from one another and interrelated in terms of the spatial structure.

Now, the grammatical character of statements phrased in the containment idiom is to effectively prevent an alternative statement from gaining momentum. This alternative way is to see things *as* space and not *in* space—i.e., to see things as penetrating into each other in an organic manner that renders the distinction between an island and an embryo non-fundamental and trivial. As already indicated, Broyle's comparison between the respective grammatical status of Newton's 'All objects are in space' and Wittgenstein's 'Every rod has a length' supports my move of assimilating the containment idiom of space with its referential identity. The meaning-function of 'Every rod has a length' boils down to that of 'Every coloured patch fits into its own surroundings,' or 'Every object fits into its own space,' or more effectively, to the identity-statement 'p = p'. It is not difficult to appreciate how the meaning of all these statements

is to be activated in the containment imagery of space much in the Newtonian style, where the identity of each object is constituted through the mechanism of ejecting and reverting back to its elusive and occult socket that forever spills out of the object to assume a non-descriptional and non-sensible referent. In this connexion, one can even ponder how the spatial and the numerical paradigms stand on the same plane, for the necessity of the numerical paradigm, say 2 + 2 = 4, is unpacked through the imageries of spatial containment—the freezing of a cinematographic picture into a physiognomic cycle of aspectual interlock. To recall the phenomenon in more specific details: the function of the mathematical paradigm consists in the dispersal of a white beam of light into seven colours and reverting it back to its original identity through the mechanism of passing the beam through crossing prisms. It is the same kind of dynamism as involved in thrusting a beach ball into space—where every manoeuvre with the ball is a corporealisation of the incorporeal space-container. This puts the identity of each number on the same footing with the geometrical identity of each object, i.e., with the non-sensible and incorporeal wall of its container.

We should be in a position to appreciate that all the statements whereby Newton ascribes different properties to space, viz., 'Space is uniform and immobile,' 'Space is unlimited in extent,' 'Space is immutable and eternal,' 'Parts of space are inseparable from one another,' 'Space and parts of space neither interact, nor act upon objects, nor offer any resistance to them,' are all grammatical statements. Just as a grammatical statement like '2 + 2 = 4' does not impose any ontological constraint upon reality—either to there being numbers in the Platonic realm, or to definite instantiations of concepts—similarly the grammatical paradigm of 'All things are in space' does not necessitate or refer to an invisible or incorporeal ontology.

Interestingly and intriguingly, what we have been insisting as being a false ontology of terminal points in space with geometrical gaps in between is also sought to be ruled out in the Newtonian scheme, by such statements as 'All parts of space

are inseparable from one another,' 'There are no holes in space.' Now would the grammatical status of these statements leave open the alternative geometry of space being discontinuous and consisting of several truncated spaces disjoined from one another, with no space in between? Such an alternative possibility seems to militate against our Wittgensteinian reading of privacy as being an ontological myth of disjoined and pre-conceptual lumps of space.

I think the best way to smooth out these tensions is to rethink the formal and architectonic character of the mutually conflicting statements on space as being 'connected' and 'disconnected'. Such statements should be looked upon as the starting point of a discourse, each figuring as a guide rail activating different patterns of uses, not based on different ontologies. Propositions like '2 + 2 = 4' or '2 + 2 = 1' do not contend that different *objects* or *entities* really become 4 or become 1. These propositions are different ways of playing language-games—different styles of carving out different cinematographic pictures. Similarly the statements 'Parts of space are connected' and 'Parts of space are disconnected' are both geared to the containment paradigm: both present incorporeal husks or containers of objects, floating the added option of these containers themselves being continuous or discontinuous with one another. Following Lucretius (or rather following Broyle's reading of Lucretius), we can say that when space has to be a solid container in order to allow a vacuum within objects, one must also allow the possibility of empty space leaking out of the walls, and thus creating empty spaces between two space-containers or outside a single one. So while both options—of space/s being continuous or discontinuous— are entrenched in the containment paradigm and thus on a false ontology of space, Wittgenstein's construal of privacy in terms of pre-conceptual and truncated lumps of space does not seek to offer an alternative ontology of one continuous or organic space as really given. An ontology of everything being penetrated by everything betrays a commitment to the essence of each thing as being what it was before being penetrated by

other things—a veiled admission of objects being contained in separate containers, before they are broken through by other containers. As already discussed in chapter II, section 3, Wittgenstein's anti-foundationalism is best appreciated not as based on a slippery and nebulous reality where things really have a fuzzy character and a tendency to slide into others. Rather, the crux of Wittgenstein's attack on foundations is the primacy of actions. Actions are not based either on a determinate or an indeterminate reality, but actions themselves—to repeat—bend, blend and break space into objects and their interrelations, their mutual continuities and discontinuities. Thus, iterating meanings through a continuous space or truncating them into disjoint lumps is not trailing behind alternative ontologies; these are rather different modes of acting. It is actions—a seamless blend of linguistic and non-linguistic uses and nothing short of it—that give sense to the talk of penetrating each space by every other, by either an unbroken continuity of iterations, or creating disjoints between them. It is space—the space of continuous uses—that creates either continuity or the discontinuity between spaces, between each occasion of use.

In fine, Wittgenstein's insights on grammar, when effectively applied to space, wean us away from a residual and irreducible frame in which objects are smugly situated, from frames that constitute events within which human actions are entrenched.

2. Russell versus Wittgenstein on the Public and the Private

2.1 *Exposing Russell's Theory of Matter, Sense-Data, Private and Public Space*

Newton's theory of space drawn in terms of abiding physical objects smugly resting in incorporeal containers invites a compelling contrast with Russell's scheme. It should be noted first that, while in Newton's theory two subjects could share the same substantial space-containers housing the same object, Russell's scheme invoked innumerable bits of private space (and private time), which in their turn needed to be integrated into

a common overarching framework. An exposition of Russell's theory of matter, sense-data, private and public space will eventually open up a profitable entry into Wittgenstein's view of space, time, reference and action.[5]

According to Russell, the physical object has to be exhibited as the function of sense-data, and not the reverse, as physics generally attempts to do. Instead of taking physical objects as primitives for constructing sense-data, one should take sense-data as primitives and construct physical objects in their terms. A sense-datum for Russell is part of the whole that is given to our senses at one time, e.g., particular patches of colour, particular noises, etc. He concedes that the atomic facts of perception (like this patch of red is to the left of that patch of blue) too can be conveniently regarded as sense-data. Instead of thinking an unknowable physical object as projecting different mental representations in different minds, we should envisage it as *itself* (the word 'itself' being a grammatical convenient) dissipating into several interactive relations in different directions—with the surrounding airwaves, light, the different real positions at which the different subjects are stationed, the different sense organs, nerves, brains, all of which are physical objects, all of which together form a physical system or series. (So it is interesting to note that space relations were pronounced to be given as sense-data at the very outset of Russell's theory of construction.)

Thus, each sense-datum is physical and in that sense objective, and the arguments usually adduced in favour of the subjectivity of sense-data merely demonstrate their physiological subjectivity. Each sense-datum is situated in a space that is objectively private—belonging exclusively to a single perceiver—and cannot be shared by any other. The full significance of Russell's notion of private space needs to be unpacked in relation to his distinction between *sense-data*, *sensibilia* and *sensation*. If *per impossibile* there were a complete human body with no mind

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[5] I have chiefly followed Russell's exposition of matter in his chapter titled 'The Relation of Sense-Data to Physics', and also chapter VII, in Bertrand Russell, *Mysticism and Logic* (London: Unwin, 1963).

inside it, all these sense-data would have existed as *sensibilia* or *possible* sense-data in relation to that body, which would be actualised in the form of sense-data if there were a mind in the body. The possible sense-data are actualised by getting into a relation of acquaintance with the subject. While Russell brings in the reference to the human subject and human awareness to distinguish sense-data from sensibilia, he carefully points out that sense-data enter into the human awareness as an empirical matter of fact; they form no logical component of the latter. 'What the mind adds to *sensibilia*, in fact, is *merely* awareness: everything else is physical or physiological'.[6] The process of becoming aware is called 'sensation', which is thus different from both sense-data and sensibilia. A sense-datum is clearly distinct from a sensation, which consists in the subject's awareness *of* the sense-datum; it stands over and against the subject as the external object of which the subject is aware in a sensation. In many cases it may be a part of the subject's body—the nervous irritation or electronic impulses. Thus, a private space housing the sense-data is not unreal or mental, it is an appearance which the universe presents from a certain point of view.

Now, just as there can be a space with a possible sense-datum (i.e., with the percipient's body without the mind), similarly there can be a space without the percipient altogether. Such a space is called a perspective. A perspective space materialises in a private space when it comes to be invested with a percipient, i.e., when it comes to be invested with sensibilia that in their turn actualise into full-fledged sense-data by getting into a relation of acquaintance with the percipient. A private space according to Russell is determined by a specific sense-datum whereby the purported privacy boils down to a physiological specificity. This physiological specificity as shaping up a perspective is somewhat like a positional objectivity—a position which persists even if there is no observer occupying that perspective. So for Russell, private space is shaped by a perceiver occupying a particular

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[6] Ibid., p. 111.

standpoint, while perspective stands for a more neutral concept independent of the perceiver. To put a little differently, a perspective is a possibility in which a private space is actualised, or an actuality which a possible perceiver may come to inhabit. So it turns out that for Russell, a private space is much broader than the perspective space, for while the former forges a correlation between several spaces afforded by different senses, the perspective space is that in which one whole private world counts as a point or at least as a spatial unit.[7] Here Russell, in floating an unrepresented and un-enacted perspective as a species of privacy, is throwing up an interesting option different from both the dualists and non-dualists.

In Russell's scheme, the abiding material substance dissipates into an array of sense-data. He gives an interesting exposition of the illusion as to matter being a mysterious source of contrary appearances, itself being over and above them. The closer we approach an object, the less is the intervening matter between it and the human body, and the less is the variation of appearances. As we travel further, the appearances diverge more and more from their initial character. It is on the basis of this proximate, initial character of appearances that the causal laws can be formulated. Approaching as near the object as possible, we think that as we bump against it, we also bump against the limit of appearances—against matter, the pure and unitary substratum of appearances. But it is nothing but the process of gradual diminution of variations and interventions that produces the illusion of the ultimate limit of appearances. Russell points out that we can never get at the limit of appearances, for, as we know, when we go on dividing matter, we also go on dividing sense-data, i.e., we go on dissipating matter itself into further classes of sense-data. So matter does not lose its materiality as it did with different versions of idealism, it just loses its dubious status of an unknowable substratum of appearances, a status accorded to it in representative realism. Instead of being a single

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[7] Ibid., p. 118.

and elusive lump, it spreads out into classes of physical sense-data in many modes of physical interaction in many spaces—each private to a specific percipient.[8]

A complete account of a physical object in terms of appearances would involve counterfactuals invoking further physical objects as well as sensibilia and other people's sense-data in many other private spaces.

> If a man were to sit down between two others, the appearances which the room would present to him would be intermediate between the appearances which it presents to the two others: and … this appearance would not exist as it is without the sense-organs, nerves and brains of the newly arrived spectator….[9]

For our present discussion we need to add that a complete account of physical objects in terms of appearance has to invoke intermediary perspective spaces housing possible percipients.[10]

Subjectivity is the characteristic of perspectives and biographies, the characteristic of giving a worldview from a particular place. The given data are neutral to both modes of

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[8] Ibid., pp. 122–23.

[9] Ibid., p. 114.

[10] This talk of counterfactuals naturally invites a comparative engagement with Kripke, particularly in view of the fact that Kripke's theory is a modern version of Russell's non-descriptivism or externalism. It is indeed questionable whether Russell's talk of counterfactuals is framed in Kripke's requirements, viz., that all valid counterfactuals have to hinge on a unique transworld referent. But in this case, Russell's formulation on counterfactuals does not hark back to the logical atoms or genuine referents in his scheme, nor do counterfactual statements have logical proper names as their subject-terms. Rather, Russell's counterfactual is a form of speculation on the existence of perspective spaces and percipients with their physiological being in that space. These counterfactual statements do not in any way connect with the logically proper names through a direct predication on these names, but at most through a meta-linguistic connection of entailment between one statement and another.

arrangement: In the physical or active mode, a datum is taken as a sign of a certain material phenomenon, i.e., of a group of certain other particulars. In the passive mode it is taken away from that group and put in a different context where it causes images and voluntary movement.

As we have already noted, matter as an ideal system of perfectly regular appearances is never a datum but inferred on the basis of proximal appearances. It is on this basis that the causal laws are formulated, and it is on this supposition of a relatively invariable and seemingly perspectiveless matter that distant appearances as well as possible perspectival variations are inferred. The nearer appearances only increasingly approximate an ideal system of regular appearances, and thereby project themselves into such illusions. Such an ideal system that puts an end to all variations and irregularities is, as Russell says, a 'logical fiction'.[11] The difference between mind and matter is only the difference between the laws by which the data are configured. It is extremely important to note that while the arrangement of data by physical-causal laws in active space can only be stated in terms of matter which is both inferred and constructed, the arrangement of data in passive space by psychological-causal laws can be stated exhaustively in terms of the given data. If science is able to exhibit material units fully in terms of constituents analogous to sensations, and as correlated by laws that do not fall back upon the logical fiction of matter, it would have achieved a unified account of what actually happens—a task which metaphysicians have sought to achieve without success.

2.2 *Russell's Attempt to Situate All Perspectives and Private Spaces in Public Space*

As long as there was a clean, empty space between two neatly bounded objects, as long as there were two observers with stolid bodies and sense organs (as in the Newtonian scheme),

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[11] Russell, *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism*, Lecture VIII.

they could share the same space-container. But as, with Russell, the objects exploded into an overwhelmingly large number of data, gone is that clean, good old space of ours where things were demarcated by neat boundaries, distanced by respectable voids in between. Now, one has to find a matching number of containers, each housing an exclusive set of data for an exclusive observer. Russell argues that as long as we hold by an unduly conventional theory of space with merely three dimensions, as schoolmasters have taught us, we shall be caught up not only in the problem of integration, but also in other simplistic and uninspiring predicaments. It would then seem that we have packed the world much fuller than it can possibly hold. At every place between us and the sun, there would have to be a particular that is a member of the sun as it was a few minutes ago. Similar constructions would apply to any planet or star visible from that place as well as at the place where I am. Altogether it would seem that the world is congested, toppling over everywhere, as if our space is not adequate to hold this prodigal and ever-exploding world of teeming sense-data. So Russell comes forth with the solution of invoking a six-dimensional space, rough, untidy and multifaceted, instead of the polished space of physics—a space which would have plenty of room for all the particulars for which we want to have positions. He suggests that while the private and the perspective worlds are three-dimensional, the public space is six-dimensional.

Thus, while each private space is exclusive and unshareable, it would allow itself to be fitted into a space of larger dimensions. Since each of the private spaces is itself three-dimensional, the whole world of particulars is thus arranged in a six-dimensional space. For each particular, three dimensions are required to assign its position in its own space and three more to assign the position of its space among the other spaces.[12] This point might be pressed home with the help of a contrived example. Suppose there were two two-dimensional lines without any depth. These cannot be joined with each other with respect to their breadth-

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[12] Russell, *Mysticism and Logic*, p. 104.

less and depthless length in a hypothetically two-dimensional world. But in a three-dimensional space, they can be fitted one over the other. Thus, Russell's notion of space is starkly non-Kantian—it is not a form of intuition that is singular, excluding the logical possibility of multiple instantiations. For Russell, there will be many spaces which are not parts of a single one—the space of one man's object and that of another will have no space in common. Russell explains that the immediate spatial relations that are perceived to hold between the different parts of a sensible space perceived by one man, do not hold between parts of sensible spaces perceived by different men. Thus, Russell reiterates that there are a multitude of three-dimensional spaces, all those that are perceived as well some of those that are not perceived, for the simple reason that there are no perceivers in those spaces.

Like all private spaces, all perspective spaces too call for a correlation in *one* space. Russell goes on to illustrate how the appearance of a penny is scaffolded into different groups according to the similarity of their shapes or sizes as well their internal differences within each group. The penny appears in a number of different perspectives—in some it looks larger, and in some smaller, in some it looks circular and in others it looks elliptical with progressively different variations. We collect together all the perspectives in which it looks circular and place them on a straight line ordered in accordance with the variations in the size. Again, those perspectives from which the penny appears as a straight line with a certain thickness will similarly be placed upon a plane and ordered by the variations in the apparent size of the penny. In this way, all those perspectives in which the penny presents a visual appearance can be arranged in a three-dimensional spatial order. This space constructed out of whole perspectives as its elements is what Russell calls 'perspective space'. (It seems that here Russell takes 'perspective' in the sense of 'perceived perspective.') Russell further claims that experience teaches us a uniform pattern in which things in general (and not simply a penny in particular) exhibit their

similarity and differences in a series of appearances and allow categorisations into different perspectives. And according to Russell, this empirical fact makes it possible to construct the all-embracing space of physics. Overall, this shows how we construct a world of six dimensions, since it is a three-dimensional series of perspectives, each of which is again three-dimensional.

Russell goes on to explain how the actual private spaces of different individuals contained within the various perspectives severally can be correlated with one another. The space of physics is said to be smooth, neat and three-dimensional, and constructed by this correlation. The correlation, Russell states, is performed unconsciously, whereby the two spaces—the positional character of perspective space and the representational character of private space—are conflated. Once we appreciate this distinction between perspective place and private place, we can also recognise how the construction of the common physical space involves the two places—*from which* and *at which*—with respect to the given sensibilia. Thus, with a constructed object like a penny, one can exercise different series of perspectives with predictably regular series of change of appearances, and the place where all these lines of perspectives meet is called the place where the penny is. So firstly, there is the place which is the perspective *of which* the given sensibile is a member, and this place is the place *from which* the sensibile appears. Secondly there is a place where the other thing is *of which* the sensibile is a member or an appearance—this is the place *at which* the sensibile appears.[13] Obviously for Russell, the two places— *from which* and *at which*—define the psychological and the physicist orientation respectively; the difference between the (physiological) subjectivity of the sense-data and the physicality and externality of the same is merely the distinction between these two orientations.

Russell goes on to argue that the serious error committed by many philosophers lies in conflating the space in which the

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[13] Ibid., pp. 119–20.

perceptual experiences are located and the inferred space of physics inhabited mainly by things which cannot be perceived. The coloured surface that I see when I look at the table has a spatial position in the space of my visual field—it exists only where the eyes, nerves and the brain exist to cause the energy of the photons to undergo a certain transformation. But on the other hand, the table as a physical object consisting of electrons, positrons and neutrons lies outside my experience. This inferred space is different from my perceptual space. Russell says that it is a commonplace in philosophy that we do not see a table; what we see is a complex of sensations, from which the physical table, structurally similar (in certain respects) to the sensations, is inferred. But what is not appreciated is the insight that the space in which the physical table is located must be different from the space we know by experience. The physical object is not sensed, it has no location in physiological space. Russell further contends that since the different *kinds* of sensations—say the tactual sensation of a pinprick and the visual sensation of the prick—have no directly given spatial relation, these two spaces, visual and tactual, are correlated in one space that is outside our experience—the space that is neither visual nor tactual.[14] Further, touch-sensation has attributes like local signs which enable us to say which part of the chin is dented by the finger, or more generally, which part of the body is being touched, without looking. Russell further recommends the exercise of stripping our experience into momentary visual fields as far as we can, i.e., relieving them of all the adjuncts derived from experience. And here again, he suggests that the relations of right and left, up and down are given as sensational data which we learn to interpret as depth. He points out that in a stereoscope, two photographs are juxtaposed in a way that leads us to take them as straight variations of their angles, which in its turn generates the perception of depth by highlighting the relation between

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[14] Bertrand Russell, *Human Knowledge: Its Scope and Limits* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1966), p. 235.

the two angles. All these considerations would go to show that '[t]he construction of one space in which all our perceptual experiences are located is a triumph of pre-scientific common sense. Its merit lies in its convenience, not in any ultimate truth that it may be supposed to possess.'[15]

2.3 *Russell's Theory vis-à-vis the Enactive Theory of Perception*

Interestingly, Russell commits himself to 'static sensations' as distinguished from 'sensations of movement', and claims that both are required for the construction of the commonsense space. He further goes on to distinguish two kinds of sensations of movement—active and passive. In active sensations, we have feelings of muscular exertion, while sensations are passive 'when the observed change *seems* independent of ourselves' (italics mine). Despite using this expression, Russell perhaps refuses to acknowledge that passive sensations, in spite of their seeming independence, are actually embedded in proprioception and sensori-motor skills. Indeed, Russell concedes that passive sensations are only 'relatively passive'; there is always the activity of attention, involving the adjustment of sense organs, except in the case of violent sensations. Russell provides the following illustration: hitting our head violently against a low doorway is an almost passive sensation, whereas listening carefully to a faint sound exhibits a more pronounced element of activity.[16] So while admitting the factors of proprioception and sensori-motor skills in all types of sensation, Russell seems *not* to appreciate the fact of their *constituting* and not merely *causing* the sensations. Still less does he reckon the phenomenon of all sensations (including the so-called passive ones) as being grafted in an expansive pattern of movements that in their turn involve a much wider purview of our forms of living.

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[15] Ibid., p. 236.

[16] Ibid., p. 235.

2.4 *Russell's Attempt to Situate Different Private Biographies in One All-Embracing Time*

As noted earlier, in Russell's scheme we cannot define perspective in terms of either psychology or space, for the reasons, respectively, that there may be unperceived perspectives, and there may be no direct spatial relation between two particulars in the same perspective, say between the colour-patch that I see and the sound that I hear. Hence we need to fall back on some principles derived from time. There is, Russell claims, a direct time relation (of simultaneity or succession) between any two particulars that belong to my perspective, and hence we may define a perspective as consisting of all and only those particulars that are related by simultaneity or succession. Russell states that while simultaneity and succession involve a simple relation, there is no direct time relation between particulars belonging to my perspective and those belonging to another man. Hence he concludes that like an all-embracing space, an all-embracing time too is a construction.

We have seen that Russell has defined perspective as positional objectivity: there can be positions or points of view even when there is nobody to view it. Russell may be said to be arguing in the same vein when he contends that the first step in launching the procedure of constructing a uniform time is to appreciate time as bereft of anything inherently mental. If there are two perspectives independent of the perceiver, one might say that they will be related in time—before, after or simultaneous with—independently of any experience or any mental factor. So biography defined in terms of time (that is non-representational or non-mental) will amount to everything which is directly earlier or later than or simultaneous with a given sensibile. All these biographies or temporal sequences may not belong to the same space—they may be mutually exclusive.

How to correlate all these biographies into one all-embracing time? Russell explains that a possible route to eke out a time relation between the two sense-data belonging to two private

spaces and thus to two perspectives is to hit upon the different appearances of a momentary thing (say the sound heard by both the speaker and the hearer as simultaneous). Through this route of simultaneity between two data belonging to two different spaces, the structure of connecting two different biographies in an all-encompassing time would be laid out. Russell however takes note of a flaw in this suggested procedure. Let us consider these moments:

1. the moment at which A utters a noise and hears it
2. the moment of B's hearing of A's noise
3. the moment of B's uttering and hearing his own answering call
4. A's hearing of B's noise

Let us concede that B utters an answering response *as soon as* he hears A. That is, if 1 and 2 are simultaneous, nothing rules out the possibility of admitting 3 to be simultaneous with 2 and thus transitively to 1. And by the same force 4 also has to be simultaneous with 3 and thus with 1 and 2. Now both 1 and 4 are simultaneous with 3, but the implied simultaneity between 1 and 4 is counterintuitive. But to resist this purported simultaneity between 1 and 4 would be virtually to resist the maxim of transitivity of time—two events simultaneous with a third event will be simultaneous with each other. So to preserve the maxim, we have to concede that 1 is not simultaneous with 2 and 2 is not simultaneous with 3. Hereby one should conclude that what was considered to be the same datum, viz., a noise uttered by A and the noise heard by B, is not the same noise. It is a series of noises that travel with a definite velocity and interact with the atmosphere to generate different data. And it is through the limiting principle of the velocity of light that we divide the time into moments. That is, the time in which B hears A's shout is halfway between the moment that A hears his own and hears that of B. In this way, B's biography is interspersed between two moments in A's biography by the velocity of light—these

two biographies are correlated. The conceptual force behind this entire contention seems to be this: there cannot emerge a temporal split between two events in a vacuum, unless this split runs through the entire flow, where all the events are connected by succession.[17]

In fine, appearances in different perspectives or in different positional objectivities are grouped together as constituting what a thing is. It is not the same thing, but a thing broken into a stream of data with the tools—like electric signals, nervous currents, sound waves and light waves—all constrained by the ultimate velocity of light and the principle of causation that sets the maxim of demarcating the regions of simultaneity and succession. Russell is careful to point out that what are given as data are the simple time structures within a single biography (the direct relations of simultaneity and succession between atomic facts); while the temporal grouping of all those appearances that belong to a single thing at a given moment across the different biographies is partly determined by conventions. So are the principles of carving out the routes of succession amongst the data belonging to different biographies. Overall, the principle of correlating all these biographies into an overarching time frame is determined by conventions set within the framework of the special theory of relativity.

2.5 *A Wittgensteinian Critique of Russell's Theory of Space and Time*

Chapter II presented an elaborate critique of logical atomism, the basic tenor of which is both against the unique mode of analysis as well as against the purported simplicity of analysed elements even *within* each mode of analysis. If the crux of this critique is appreciated, we can smoothly improvise a Wittgensteinian rejoinder against Russell's construction of matter, space and time. This rejoinder will naturally be against the semantic transparency of sense-data, against the principles of combining

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[17] Russell, *Mysticism and Logic*, pp. 123–24.

them into a full-fledged material substance—as if already laid down in a space-time container—camouflaged into innumerable bits of loci.

Let us lay out this critique in terms of its required details of structure and content. First, Russell had indeed realised: (*a*) that a material thing cannot be exhaustively exhibited in terms of given data—the journey from the data to a unitary body is never complete; (*b*) the purportedly given data do not lie out there, their givenness is a metaphysical presumption. Here, (*a*) constitutes Russell's acknowledgement that any attempted elimination of physical objects in favour of sense-data would require counterfactuals that refer to other physical objects— bodies of other perceivers, different spatial positions at which they are stationed—which would again require another series of perceivers to perceive them, and so on ad infinitum. He insisted that all references to physical objects that doggedly persist in any constructional formulation are to be treated as hypotheses having some predictive power over the nature and behaviour of a group of sense-data. In the final phase of his philosophy, Russell gave up the claim that physical objects need to be eliminated exhaustively in terms of sense-data, and settled for partial construction. The ultimate entities need only to have basic structural similarity with sense-experiences; they need not involve qualities which are only given to our sense-experiences. We need only inferences and not exhaustive constructions to take us to physical objects that endure when nobody is perceiving them. While previously Russell had said that inferences can be gleaned only from induction, now he concedes that these inferences are based on a priori assumptions. These a priori principles enable us to move from sense-experiences to physical objects as structurally similar to and connected with them in space and time.[18]

As for (*b*) above, later Russell came to admit that simplicity and complexity are contrived in relation to each other in a

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[18] Russell, *Human Knowledge*, parts IV and VI.

particular context. A simple, undefined term in one mode of formulation will turn out to be definable in another. Thus, in one mode of systematisation, pleasure may be defined as the satisfaction of desire, while in another mode of systematisation desire would be defined as something that is pleasant. However, Russell still accorded a simplicity to experience: though itself complex, it is simple with respect to belief, judgement or inference.

It is not difficult to track down the presumption of an underlying space-time structure running through different phases of Russell's constructionism. First, the patent charge of incompletability that Russell as well as his critics level against his earlier programme could not have been framed unless one had already formed a notion of what the complete object would look like, that is, had already framed it in a unique mode of conception. In other words, the acknowledgement of the epistemological gaps in construction is grounded on the putative semantic transparency of the sense-data. (As noted in chapter II, this is a basic error that is shared by both the descriptivists and the non-descriptivists.) Ironically, this charge takes heed only of the infinity of *number* of sense-data, already subsumed under a unique type and stretched out within a spatio-temporal outline; it does not take heed of the infinity of *types* or *modes* of construction that defy any proposed stock of primitives. Second, even in the later stages of his philosophical journey, Russell failed to appreciate the internal rupture that robs the so-called primitives of their 'primitive' status. The isomorphic correspondence between the picture and the world is itself a picture which does not have a pre-interpretive content, but is fleshed out bit by bit through uses and practices.

Russell tried to shed the dogmas of realism by exhibiting the world in terms of given and unproblematic entities without realising that such a correlation or constructional relation between the world and the experience is itself subject to further constructions. This lacuna gets betrayed in the fact that even after conceding different sets of simples and different modes

of analysis, he still assumes such qualitative variations to be mapped onto a given quantitative boundary. A defence of Russell's constructionism might consist in placing it on the same footing with cartography, the latter being an exercise that does not recreate experience in the fullness of depth or other sensible qualities, but rather provides a schematic, selective, clarified and conventional representation. This is indeed the way in which Goodman sought to defend Carnap's constructionism,[19] insisting that just as a cartographer does not need to dig into the depths of the earth or explore it from infinite points of view, but simply transcribes it into flat surfaces or physiognomies, Carnap's construction also has the same end in view. We now know how to counter an attempted defence of Russell along the same lines—we need to reiterate that the quantitative boundaries are not given prior to any construction, waiting there to be readily and neatly scooped up into the map. Quality and quantity are blended together and lend themselves to multiple modes of construction. Here perhaps we need to refresh our memory about a specific point, that space is not inertly assembled out of smaller areas into larger ones—the insight that is reflected in some of Wittgenstein's observations in *PI* 48 (already discussed in chapter II, section 1.12).

The general structure of the Wittgensteinian rejoinder to Russell's theory of space, time and action sketched above can be substantiated with specific reference to the internal details of Russell's narrative of construction. Russell is denying on the one hand the all-embracing Newtonian space where all objects are positioned, or Kant's 'infinite given whole' as mind's form of intuition. What is given as a crude material is not a single kind of relation, but those of different kinds, obtaining between parts of one visual field, and also between different sense-fields— say the visual and the tactual. In other words, in lieu of one container, Russell seems to commit himself to several of them;

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[19] Nelson Goodman, 'Significance of Der Logische Aufbau', in P. A. Schilpp (ed.), *The Philosophy of Rudolf Carnap* (The Library of Living Philosophers, Inc., 1963), pp. 545–58.

and to link one container to another and thereby to construct a single all-encompassing space, he has to concoct several bridge-containers, so to speak. His account of forging the connection between these discrete spaces falls back on an empty space-frame as given, and thus the sense-data also come to be invested with a semantic transparency in relation to the physical object situated in an empty spatio-temporal outline.

Talking about the diversity and complexity of what seem like unitary and stolid material bodies, Russell says that a body which fills a cubic foot will be admitted to consist of many smaller bodies, each occupying only a tiny volume; similarly a thing persisting for an hour is to be regarded as composed of many things with lesser duration. He goes on to claim that a true theory of matter will require a division into time corpuscles as well as space corpuscles.[20] This style of narration in terms of containment indeed betrays Russell's tacit admission of an empty space-time skeleton underlying objects.

Further, Russell's account of the process in which the different perspectives are ordered in one space has several pitfalls. He claims that it is by our own movements as well as the testimony of other people that we discover that two perspectives, though they can never contain the same sensibilia, yet contain very similar ones; and the spatial order of a certain group of sensibilia in a private space of one perspective is very similar to the spatial order of another group in the private space of another perspective. Now the question is whether one can judge two sensibilia to be similar unless one has already conceptualised them, or whether we can learn this through testimony independent of any language or semantic interpretation. Moreover, movement or action cannot open up the similarity between different groups of sensibilia in a six-dimensional space unless that space is already fleshed out in terms of, and does not precede or generate, our movements and actions. This narrative presents the typically foundationalist flaw of putting the cart before the horse: for all such categorisations

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[20] Russell, *Mysticism and Logic*, p. 97.

of sense-data into different perspectives according to their shape and size, arranging them into a single straight line or on a plane is not possible unless we have already created space in terms of objects and their mutual distances and differences, unless we always start by enacting a full-fledged space in and through our enacted perceptions. Russell's account of starting with bare sense-data, arranging them into perspectives and placing them on separate planes or straight lines is a regressive account of foundationalism, though one with less of a neuro-technological flourish than that of Raftopoulos.

Further discrepancies in Russell's theory come up in the added details of the distinction between the two kinds of space—specifically in his explanation as to how it comes about that two places of different sorts are associated with every sense-datum, viz., the place *at which* it is, and the place *from which* it is perceived. Russell has already explained that since no sensibile is the datum of two people at once, each person—in so far as his sense-data are concerned—lives in a private world. This private world is again a network of the spaces afforded by different senses. We have already noted that for Russell, all positions are relative, i.e., a place is definable only by the things in and around it; the same place cannot occur in two private worlds which have no common constituents. This statement[21] immediately betrays an inconsistency between two positions— on the one hand, space is sought to be exhaustively reduced to the sense-data, with no outer husk sticking out like the walls of a container; on the other hand, space as an external position *in and around* which the things are placed is presupposed in this acclaimed reduction of the space-container into the content. That is to say, each sense-datum spills out a specific husk or a container, and each container is supposed to exclude other containers, effecting a void in between. To fill in this void, Russell invents a six-dimensional public space that connects each of the three-dimensional private spaces with one another.

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[21] Ibid., p. 118.

Thus, when Russell breaks up stolid matter into sense-data, he is not able to break the space-container exhaustively in terms of the content; rather, instead of the previous three-sided container, he invokes many-sided containers, as if exploring the crooked and jagged nooks and corners of what seemed to be the three-dimensional receptacle. The container is not effectively reduced to the content; rather, the content is recast as spilling out newer husks, newer outlines in newer directions.

The Russellian construction of a single, all-comprehending time too consists in pre-semantic sense-data, which, in a manner of speaking, throw up thin membranes in the shape of their outer walls, in the forward direction. Russell's narration is phrased in terms of dissecting objects into flat patches that multiply in the forward direction irreversibly. Time, i.e., the one-dimensional axis of space, proliferates into thin layers or membranes creating infinitesimal fractions of time. More and more microscopic bits of space and time are created in correspondence with the velocity of light. Suppose there is a 10-foot distance between my body and an object, this small distance is dissected into fractions of a second, which amounts to allotting or seeing each of these bits in terms of a represented or duplicated membrane. This is the imagery that Russell contrives to occlude the enactive dynamism of space-time itself shaping into objects and events, and he seeks to achieve this with the tools of microscopically multiplied space-time husks as external layers to serve as their loci.

Russell's attempt to get rid of a loaded metaphysics that includes material substrata, space and time *qua* given containers or external structures, or as a priori forms of intuition, is at the cost of admitting bare particulars held together in a transparent relation of simultaneity and succession. It is not clear whether he appreciates that the supposedly given time relation defining a perspective too is constructed as a one-dimensional axis of space. When the notion of a perspective is enunciated in terms of particulars held in the simple and direct relation of time given to an individual subject, we should appreciate that all these notions are caught in a cycle. The notion of succession and simultaneity

(in the way Russell presents it in this context) cannot be defined except in terms of the notion of an individual subject and that of a perspective. The notion of a particular, though posed as simple and undefined, draws its content and plausibility from the confined space-time perspective of a single individual. Russell's claim that there can be a biography and a perspective independent of any perceiver betrays the myth of specifically given space-time positions independent of any construction. These would figure as the outlines of particulars and their modes of configuration. Here we have located a Russellian version of a foundational theory of action—proffering specific and disconnected space-time husks for the simple particulars, determining the modes of their synthesis into the uniform and public space-time frame for housing the complex construction of objects and events. Thus it is perhaps not a far cry to claim that Russell's theory of space-time and particulars has all the potentials of a foundational theory of action where the space-time husk of objects and their configuration shape up the event-receptacle of actions—the favourite postulate of Davidson.

How would Wittgenstein react to this non-Kantian notion of space—to this notion of a disconnected multitude of spaces? To these extra coordinates that attempt to contrive a forced reconciliation between connect and disconnect? I had noted that the perception of three dimensions is an enaction and not passive contacts with the other two dimensions; and a one-dimensional creature cannot perceive depth for the simple reason that it cannot *enact* space to synthesise it with the other two dimensions. Similar remarks apply here: a perspectival space or objects seen from one standpoint would have to go through the principles of conceptual operation—sensori-motor skills and proprioception—and not the passive representation of other aspects or points of view.

Russell indeed seeks to avoid dualism by making private spaces objective, i.e., not lapsing into one-dimensional temporality, attempting to demystify reality and space-time in the process. But what he ultimately does is to contrive minute

atoms or oodles of isolated reality bits that are already absorbed into sockets situated in a space with lines of interconnections already laid out. Wittgenstein would respond that unless these reality bits are already enacted into space, they cannot be strung together in lines of interconnections.

We know that for Russell, the particulars occupying the six-dimensional space, classified in one way, form things; classified in another way, they form perspectives and biographies. He insists that only when physical things have been dissected into a series of classes of particulars can the conflict between the point of view of physics and that of psychology—or the doctrines of realism and idealism—be overcome. For Wittgenstein, it would be different modes of enaction, not alternative configurations of the same set of neutral sense-data, that would hold the key to the solution of this classical polemics.

3. Wittgenstein's Notion of Time: Hintikka's Analysis

3.1 *Memory-Time versus Information-Time*

Hintikka starts by addressing Moore's account of Wittgenstein's distinction between memory-time and information-time. In the former, there is only earlier and later and not past and future. It is that system of time-reference which is strictly relative to the vantage point of the subject's present moment, i.e., only to the 'now'. All that it comprises is the totality of one's present moments and expectations—only earlier and later, which cannot be situated or measured in an all-encompassing scheme of past, present and future. It is a certain order of events where all of them approach a point such that it will make no sense to say 'B occurred after the present' or 'I remembered that which later became future'; for this purported reference to the future can only obtain with a public framework of past, present and future—a public chronology implemented by clocks, calendars and other time-keeping instruments. Obviously, it is the latter category of time that is given the status of 'information-time'.

For Wittgenstein, at least in the Tractarean period. memory-time is conceptually independent of any external physical criterion or physical time measurement. This virtually amounts to the thesis of solipsism. From 1929 onwards, he gave up the idea of memory-time or phenomenological time as conceptually unsound and admitted only physical time or information-time. The critique of memory-time obviously amounts to the famous critique of private language, which I have already presented in chapter III, section 2.2, chiefly following the style of exposition in the *Philosophical Investigations*. Once we recall the content of that critique, we should be able to appreciate that the account narrated by Hintikka on the basis of *Philosophical Remarks* is slightly different from the former, at least in so far as it draws on the essentially public nature of language. While in the Tractarean scheme, propositions could be confronted with reality directly, i.e., pre-semantically, the fall of such self-interpretive logical atoms in the later period throws up the need for an indirect confrontation—one that is mediated by calculus-like operations or activities. These calculations must take place in physical time, for the calculations cannot be determined to be correct or incorrect unless the calculator is able to recognise the persistence of these symbols throughout a universal public time. Hence, language must belong to the physicalistic system; there cannot be a language that purports to capture private, phenomenological objects.

I shall, however, argue that Hintikka's presentation perhaps misses Wittgenstein's basic anti-foundationalist resistance against a pre-given universal time frame that houses events and objects as their bare outline, claiming to anticipate all the alternative actional descriptions. Further, the way Hintikka presents the polemics about the relative primacy of memory-time versus information-time raises a doubt as to how far he appreciates the notional absurdity of private time or phenomenological objects that virtually boil down to terminal lumps of space, geometrically delinked from all others. When Hintikka projects the possibility of memory-time being primary,

and the notions of our present, past, future being constructed out of these insular moments, the implications of this proposal are not entirely clear. Does it mean that the one-dimensional worm attains depth to look laterally and around to match 'this' with 'that', 'forward' with the 'behind'—an operation that is ruled out by the very notion of the non-spatial private 'now'? On the other hand, if information-time is primary, Hintikka says that the testimony of memory has to be ultimately tested against the public evidence, like the regularities of the natural events, calendars, clocks, etc.[22] But this option also strongly suggests that he reads Wittgenstein's memory-time as having merely an epistemological gap with the public coordinates of day, date and year, a gap that can in principle be bridged by empirical information. Such epistemological gaps are illustrated in persons like Rip Van Winkle who are detached (willingly or unwillingly) from the conventional calendars or time frame; one can also cite the cases of Abu Hussain, or a person suffering from paramnesia. All these persons fail to relate some stretch of their life with the standard scheme of time. The epistemological or empirical gaps in these cases are fundamentally different from the conceptual gap built into the putatively exclusive representation of time flowing only in the forward direction. This conceptual gap between memory-time and information-time amounts to blocking the space in other dimensions, thereby imposing a contentless or pre-conceptual status to the private. The talk of a pre-existing space-time framework to house the momentary particulars makes sense only in so far as the talk of our recoiling into private time or enlarging into a public one are two ways of enacting space and time. A *koopamanduk* (literally a well frog, figuratively a time-warped person) who thinks that the walls of the well are the end of space is not handling terminal points that bump against a void; it is his *inactive action* of bumping against the well coupled with a dynamic vision of a darkness moving beyond that constitutes his spatial lacuna. The

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[22] Hintikka, 'Wittgenstein on Being and Time', pp. 5–6.

way Hintikka poses the options between the relative primacy of memory-time and information-time is a bit misleading, in so far as it has a tendency to lapse into the bare space-time skeleton of events underlying actions.

Along with the standard commentary on Wittgenstein, Hintikka's refusal to ascribe any vestige of private meaning—even the minimal property of private reference—to language is geared to his wholehearted acceptance of a private and phenomenological reality smugly lying in a pre-linguistic realm. However, our refusal to concede a private reference to phenomenological or pre-conceptual objects takes us in a different direction, a direction that compels us to blend language with two other phenomena that were erroneously kept separate—the supposedly phenomenological time-cum-privacy and the non-linguistic activity. Hintikka quotes Wittgenstein in favour of his commitment to pre-linguistic privacy: 'The world we live in is the world of sense-data, but the world we talk about is the world of physical objects.'[23] I argue that by saying that we live in the world of sense-data, Wittgenstein does not necessarily commit himself to their pre-linguistic presence. It is not that our living in a world where we interact with various objects triggers off our causal language-games in a non-conceptual manner; rather, forms of living and language are blended together in a way that language becomes a sophisticated extension of our actions. So when Wittgenstein says that sense-data are sources of our concepts and hence cannot be caused by our concepts, he does not mean that they lie outside our realm of language. It is a part of our language-game that sense-data are given a privileged entry into our discourse, or that all propositions about causation are learnt from sense-data. This becomes clear as he immediately follows up the previous observation with the statement that the cyclone cannot be the cause of bad weather, because to say that there is a cyclone is to say that there is bad weather. To say

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[23] Desmond Lee (ed.), *Wittgenstein's Lectures, 1930–32: From the Notes of John King and Desmond Lee* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), p. 82.

that sense-data are the causes of our perception of objects is an inelegant tautology, for to say that they cause our perception is to say that they are sense-data. But this should not compel us to say that they are the pre-linguistic source of our experience or that they, as forms of our living, are the pre-linguistic foundation of all our descriptions of causation. Wittgenstein's forms of living are not elusive phenomena that recede with every description, but are absorbed into an indefinite progression of linguistic and non-linguistic practices.

3.2 *The Privatist Space of I: The Geometrical Eye and the Physical Eye*

Wittgenstein analyses the privatist claims that are hysterically tinged with the anxiety of possessing an exclusive and impenetrable space—a terminal point geometrically delinked from other spaces. The claim is expressed as 'I can't know what he sees,' even when he (truthfully and minimally) says that he sees a red patch. What is emphatically insisted here is that the same object may be before his eyes and mine, but I cannot stick my head or mind into his, so what is real and immediate with him is not so with me (and vice versa) (*BB* p. 61).

Let us remind ourselves at this juncture that Russell's theory of insular but physical sense-data defining the exclusivity of private spaces was specially designed to replace the mentalist idioms of the dualist theory of privacy with a notion of the unshareable but objective data of physiology. He also attempted to demystify the notion of subjectivity, with the proposal of reconfiguring the same set of data in a special way—by putting it in the passive space of a single perspective, as contrasted with the active mode of correlating it with other perspectives. This theory seems to have two major lacunae: first, it perhaps leaves unresolved the question as to *who* performs the two alternative operations of configuring the data under two modes; and second (as already discussed at length in the previous section), the theory bristles with an explosion of space-time containers to house the

innumerable sense-data instead of the official theory of a single container.

We know that for Wittgenstein, the difference between the two statements, 'I do not know what he sees' and 'I do not know what he looks at,' is not grounded on a difference of ontology of real sense-data situated in real perspectives and private spaces. The difference between the two consists in two different language-games. This will be clear once the statements about the exclusivity of the 'I' are seen not to be grounded on a unique personal identity persisting through time. Let us go back to the statement, 'When anything is seen it is *always* I who sees.' Wittgenstein argues that the fact that we are able to use a person's name as uniquely referring to the physical appearance (facial look, voice, habits, etc.) is simply because these features change gradually, and not in an abrupt manner. We have noted that our referring use of a personal name, or for that matter the referring use of any expression whatsoever, is founded not on a spatio-temporal chunk out there; it basically consists in posing an object as an indivisible and non-relational identity, keeping its structural complexity, relations with its surrounding environment and its rapidly changing features temporarily out of focus.

To press this point further, Wittgenstein indulges in a thought experiment where all human bodies look alike, but different sets of characteristics, like mildness with a high-pitched voice and slow movement, a choleric temperament with a deep voice and jerky movements, are distributed over these identical-looking bodies. He insists that under these circumstances, we would be inclined to give names not to the passively homogeneous bodies (just as we would not be inclined to baptise identical-looking chairs), but to the shifting regularities inhabiting these bodies. In this hypothetical situation, it is these repeatable features changing habitation that call for the referring game—the game of the relational interplay between simplicity and complexity or that between stasis and dynamism—to take off. Similarly, in another hypothetical situation in which people are seen to

undergo two characteristic states pertaining to their shapes and sizes, where they lapse suddenly from one to the other, each person (i.e., what we normally call 'each person') would have two names; and there is no compellingly transparent ground in favour of characterising each of them either as *one* person with *two* personalities, or as *two* persons. The predictable example of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde presents us with no clinching grounds for either option—a person with two bodies and two sets of dramatically opposed behaviours, *or* a single body with double personalities. All these considerations are supposed to demonstrate that there are no readily given identities in the shape of persons answering to personal names.

Wittgenstein goes on to contrive further situations: someone who has different personalities on odd and even dates assimilates all the respective happenings in two separate slots, without feeling any discontinuity between the two. This person may be imagined to have different looks and temperamental features for these odd and even sets. The usual circumstances that set off the referring game with personal names now indeed are faced with a challenge. These hypothetical contrivances do not proffer any decisive argument either in favour of saying that it is two persons with the same body or the same person with two different bodies. This seems to be a revealing case where it is our practices—viz., our bodily actions and the function of memorising in the alternative styles of odd and even—that create persons, i.e., the two different kinds of personhoods. The good old standard cases that set off the reference of personal names have changed, shooting off different lines of similarities. This is what Wittgenstein means by saying that 'the term "personality" hasn't got one legitimate heir only' (*BB* p. 62). And to insist that all these weird thought experiments are actually grounded on given personal identities with a given body-schema is to lapse into the myth of space-time slots as universal containers, the myth that we are trying to dislodge.

For Wittgenstein, it is through a series of progressive contrasts that the talk of the pure subject or the dissipation of the

subject/object dichotomy gets its sense. To use a very interesting example to fortify our point: 'A proof that 777 occurs in the expansion of p, without shewing where' works through evoking an image of a 'dark zone of indeterminate length very far on in p', where we can no longer rely on our devices for calculating.…' Then further out, we imagine another zone where we can again see something 'in a *different* way' (*RFM* IV-27). The proof of the absolute subject also thrives on a process of posing subjects of subjects…, as a tantalisingly long zone with a blurred edge where we magically cross over the indeterminate region and bump our head against the absolute subject—the terminus of all linguistic and non-linguistic exercises. Here suddenly our discourse takes a different turn, from an innocuous play of grammatical contrasts to an ontological commitment. We think that after all we must be weaving a piece of cloth (the pure subject so to speak) 'because we are sitting at a loom—even if it is empty—and going through the motions of weaving' (*PI* 414).

For Wittgenstein, the patent metaphysical claims about consciousness being the ultimate precondition of all experience, itself beyond experience and objectification, can simply be laid down as a game of super-reference. 'I' does not identify anything through a description, nor does it misdescribe, nor does it ever fail to refer (*PI* 401–11). We know that for Wittgenstein the difference between reference and description is not ontological, but that between two different roles that expressions come to play—roles that can smoothly be switched across different games. But the 'I' plays the constant role of marking the *origin* of all referring games. For instance, putting pieces on the board, uttering words in a memory-game, ostensive teaching or learning of words, bringing blocks and slabs at the call of the builder are all referring games (*PI* 49, 2, 6 respectively, discussed earlier in chapter II), each of which may be recast into a descriptive move in another context. But the use of 'I' is like highlighting or stamping a label on the space from which the hands' movements in putting the pieces on the board or the activities of the builder's assistant start off. It is this super-referring function of

'I' remaining constant over the mutual interplay of referring and descriptive moves that creates the myth of pure consciousness and transcendental subjectivity. As Glock puts it aptly, 'I' is not a deictic expression; to say 'I' is not to point to anything, it is rather comparable to raising one's arm to do the pointing. It is a point from which the deictic graph originates, it does not itself have a position therein.[24] But we need to remind ourselves constantly that 'I' is not located in a unique point of origin; rather, the super-referring function of 'I' is an architectonic or formal requirement—a principle that is ruptured by the horizontal attack of alternative constructions of personalities and personal spaces—and is vertically fissured by its inherent semantic indeterminacy.

Now that we have learnt how to problematise the notion of a person and the reference of personal names and pronouns, we can revert to the privatist query: 'What sort of personal identity are we referring to when we say: "When anything is seen, it is always I who sees?"' Wittgenstein explains that what is sought to be contrived by this 'I' is not the particular experience of I, but the experience of seeing itself. Let us consider the mechanism through which the experience of seeing is transformed to the experience of I. Wittgenstein asks us to imagine the solipsist pointing to his eyes when he says 'I.' He adds a parenthetical comment: 'Perhaps because he wishes to be exact and wants to say expressly which eyes belong to the mouth which says "I" and to the hands pointing to his own body' (*BB* p. 63). All this shows that the rhetoric of solipsism consists in conjuring up a super-referring game that wraps up the I with eyes and hands in a single spatial unit. This statement creates the false impression of pointing to the eye as a physical object, and this is due to a conflation between what Wittgenstein terms 'the geometrical eye' and the 'physical eye'. The radical difference between the

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[24] Glock, *A Wittgenstein Dictionary*, p. 163. Wittgenstein's observations in *The Blue and Brown Books*, pp. 67–68, and his 'Notes for Lectures on "Private Experience" and "Sense Data"', *Philosophical Review*, vol. 77, no. 3 (1968), pp. 275–320, are relevant in this connexion.

grammar of these two expressions may be clarified with the help of interesting examples: 'I touch my eyes' or 'I move my fingers to the eye' may be used in unusual situations where I use the mirror image of my fingers nearing the eye as the criterion for the fingers actually touching my eyes, or determining whether it is a place of a body that 'sees'. Along similar lines, I can be said to see the 'tip of my nose' 'or the nose that smells', or particular locations on my forehead, or even other places that lie outside my body. Pointing to the eye or any other organ by this criterion of seeing the mirror image is pointing to the geometrical eye or the geometrical organ, not to the physical one. Wittgenstein explains that the grammatical difference between the 'geometrical eye' and the 'physical eye' is the same as that between the 'visual sense-datum of the tree' and 'the tree'. One can think of surgically cutting into the physical eye, plucking away the eyelash or painting it, but not of doing the same operations with the mirror image. One can hit one's eyes themselves against the surface of the mirror on the location of the mirror image, and get both eyes as well as the glass damaged thereby. But one cannot perform similar activities with the mirror image of the eye.

Since the two different criteria of seeing the mirror image of my hands moving in front of my eyes and the muscular sensation of my hands do not coincide, we have to sensitise ourselves to the different grammars of the expressions 'physical eye' and 'geometrical eye'. The use of the expressions 'sense-datum', 'geometrical eye' or 'geometrical space' involves the exercise of creating a space by cutting up a fragment of space. Following Wittgenstein's reflections in *Philosophical Remarks* (*PR* p. 85), we can say that in so far as the geometrical eye is delinked from space, it can be said to be space itself and not *in* space. Here Wittgenstein compares the redundancy of the word 'present' with that of 'I' with respect to these two statements: 'Only the *present experience* has reality' and 'When anything is seen it is *I* who sees.' Here the status of 'I' as a super-referring expression is clearly projected as the other aspect of the spatial

insularity of memory-time. It is a mistake to assimilate both the expressions 'physical eye' and 'geometrical eye' under the same category of an 'object', albeit different *kinds* of objects. It is not only conflating the respective grammar of each of these items, but also conflating the grammar of the word 'kind'. It is absurd to say that number is a different kind of object than a numeral, or to assimilate a railway train, a railway station, a railway car, a railway accident and a railway law as different species under the single genus of 'object' (*BB* p. 64).

It emerges that the exclusivity of what is seen by the I is the exclusivity of visual space—not again an ontologically segregated visual space. The typical solipsistic statement that 'It is always I who sees when anything is seen' can also be rephrased as 'Whenever anything is seen it is *this* that is seen.' This paraphrase is usually coupled with a gesture of embracing a visual field, not concentrating on specific objects in the field. 'Turning my attention to my own consciousness' is to engage in a particular mode of behaviour: 'staring fixedly in front of me— but not at any particular point or object', glances are vacant, like someone admiring the illumination of the sky or drinking in the light (*PI* 412).

The way Wittgenstein grants a super-referring status to 'I' is to be synthesised with his apparently conflicting observations about the privatist statements. He says that statements like 'I am the vessel of life' and 'Everything except me should be unable to understand me' are lumps of words that cannot be activated in a language-game. A *koopamanduk* can think that space ends with the outlines of the well and use words to that effect, an electrician can put up a false board to cover up a socket emptied of all electrical wiring, an architect can hide a false space or a false basement in the construction of a house. (Let us recall those innovative illustrations in *Zettel*, discussed in chapter II, section 3, of people seeing colours like orange in binary fractions of red and yellow, or those who have absolute pitch.) But in none of these case do they come into possession of a delinked or insular space. Similarly, the above statements do not claim that the

privatist is bumping her head against the pre-linguistic chunk of a phenomenological object delinked from a supposedly public space-time framework; for her state of inactivity is also a mode of passive activity.[25]

3.3 *The Difference between a Perspectival Game and a Public Game: Internal Differences within the Perspectival Game*

Hintikka explains that the difference between memory-time and public time is geared to two modes of identifying objects—the perspectival mode and the public mode. We can illustrate the difference with reference to a case of colour perception. The perspectival mode of identification would consist in placing a public and impersonal visual object within the subject's visual space. The subject will be shown an array of different colour samples in a lighted room with other spectators around, and then fed with a large flash of a colour on a screen in a dark room for one second. He is then asked to answer the following question: 'Which of the colour shades placed in the lighted room was projected to you on the screen?' Identifying the correct shade on the screen would be a perspectival mode of identification. On the other hand, the public mode of identification of an object works in the opposite direction: it consists in the subject taking a visual or tactual object (or one pertaining to any other sense) well entrenched in her own perspective, and then trying to find a slot for it among the other objects seen from all perspectives. Here the subject would be shown several colour samples in succession on the screen in a dark room and then led to a single shade in the lighted room along with other audience members. Here the question would be posed as follows: 'Which of the

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[25] It should be clear that though this section significantly overlaps with sections 2.2 and 2.3 of chapter III, especially with regard to the crucial notion of privacy as a game of framing up a non-repeatable spatial exclusivity, what this section adds is the much-needed connection between the concepts of I and privacy.

colour shades that were shown to you on the screen matches with the one you see now in this room?' This experiment would have to be performed with several subjects so that they can come to a mutual agreement. This operation would obviously be a case of public identification.

We may improvise these two modes of identification with tactual content. A number of subjects are first fed with tactual perception of, say, different balls of different sizes and textures in a dark room, where they are not only directed to exchange verbal notes about their quantitative and qualitative differences (i.e., baptise each of them, label them with a unique number matched with specific tactual qualities), but are also monitored to register the joint operation of their hands on the same ball, and thus led to distribute the same tactual qualities of the ball under all possible perspectives—under all possible interactions with different sets of fingers. Each person is led to internalise the fingers of the other person within her own, and thereby activate the tactile qualities of the ball in different perspectives. After this, a single subject is provided with a single confrontation with a particular ball, and asked to identify its name and number. The entire operation would be a case of perspectival identification where a publicly distributed tactual perception is coiled up in single individual perspectives. Now the reverse exercise of the public mode of identification is not difficult to construct.

Obviously these two modes of identification are mutually compensated in a coherent whole: one cannot afford to engage in one mode of identification without engaging in the other. However, there may be other modes of perspectival identification where one engages (willingly or unwillingly) only with demonstratives, indexicals and definite descriptions that are bereft of any public system of global maps or calendars. Here the perspectives are not integrated into an all-encompassing framework of space and time.

Hintikka brings two (or rather three) allegations against Wittgenstein. First, though Wittgenstein rightly assimilates memory-time and information-time with phenomenological

and public modes of identification, he wrongly equates the phenomenological with the perspectival, thus lapsing into an erroneous transition from the memory-time versus information-time to the perspectival versus physicalistic mode of identification. Second, he does not appreciate that the perspectival mode of identification may be primary, not depending upon an overarching time. Lastly, trailing on the confusion between memory-time or phenomenological time and perspectival identification, he does not also appreciate that integrating the local times into a universal, all-encompassing time frame is based on different episodic (perspectival) memories, and not on momentary epistemic states of memory. This depersonalisation of memory-time consists in relating perspectival memory to space, or rather recasting memory-time into the one-dimensional axis of space.

I shall argue that Wittgenstein does not conflate the phenomenological and the perspectival; rather, he draws a fine-tuned distinction between the perspectival game and the private game. A perspectival mode of identification would be identifying an object from one's specific angle of perception, like 'Here is one.' A private mode of referring would be a more consciously chiselled mode of presentation. It is not only to focus on a particular orientation, but also to highlight some special sensual qualities afforded by that point of view (discussed more elaborately in chapter III, section 2.3). It is worth repeating that *the peculiar inexorability of propositions like 'My sensations are private' consists in the strategy of conjuring up an exclusive and impenetrable space for each object and covering up the triviality of this operation by an imagery of dispersal and reversal.* The crucial point is that neither the referring game nor the perspectival game can be said to be primary in the sense of operating with phenomenological objects delinked from a mode of conceptual recursion. The first-person ascription of pain does not make sense without the possibility of recursion—recursion of what it is to be I, what it is to have a sensation, what it is for my body to be placed in different positions in the same space-

time coordinates. And more importantly, if the perspectival and the private modes of referring involve an attempt to passivate the object to the sole perspective of the viewer blocking all orientations and expansions, such a manoeuvre too would be a mode of action, a mode of conceptual recursion. Above all, there may be several modes of conceptual recursion or blockage, not geared to a unique space-time framework.

Once we realise this, we shall also appreciate that for Wittgenstein, the issue of integrating the different perspectival times with a unique physical time does not stand on the same footing with Einstein's problem of integrating all local times with a universal time—the problem that figures as the major crux of the special theory of relativity. Let us first see how this programme was carried out in the special theory before we figure out Wittgenstein's response to this scheme of constructing a universal time frame. For this, we need to recount the well-known scenario before the emergence of the special theory of relativity. With all the planets constantly moving within this network of relativities, bereft of a static and vantage point outside and caught within the tension between absolute space and ether, talk of absolute rest versus absolute motion, absolute spatial positions and dimensions, started to lose ground even within the Newtonian scheme itself. But time was sought to be retained as absolute in the Newtonian scheme; it was believed that one could unambiguously measure the interval of time between two events, and this interval would be the same for whoever measured it irrespective of their spatial positions and velocities. Thus, time was completely separate and independent of space. But this notion of time came into conflict with many theories and experiments with velocity of light: the velocity of light was found to be the same irrespective of the spatial dimension through which it was moving and also of the direction—i.e., whether the measurer was moving towards or away from the source of light. The only way to solve these discrepancies was to deny the absolute status of time that was supposed to account for the expected differences in the speed of light. So Einstein

concluded that the dimensions of time too get warped along with the warping of space, thus showing the same velocity of light irrespective of all changes in spatial positions, directions and dimensions.

Without the support of an absolute space and time figuring as surrounding walls to contain all objects and events, each observer would seem to be confined to their insular space-time position, moving only within their own perspective without having any tool for connecting their perspective with an overarching framework. With the Einsteinian breakthrough, the talk of a single planet earth, housing all its inhabitants on its walls, enabling them to manipulate all its objects and move within a fixed atmospheric enclosure, seems to be based on a false ontology. But the withdrawal of this support of the fixed surrounding walls of space and time tends to lapse into another myth: each individual may now seem to be enclosed in a truncated point, geometrically delinked from all the rest—a position which Wittgenstein argues against extensively. All theories of relativity run the risk of lapsing into insular spaces logically delinked from one another, thus rendering the very mechanism of relativisation unintelligible. As we have seen, Russell sought to invoke a tool of six-dimensional space, i.e., a tool for opening up unexplored links through which the insular spaces can find routes to unfurl in broader frameworks. Einstein deployed a different tool in his special theory of relativity, through a uniform velocity of light geared to a uniform number system. Each observer could use a radar to say where and when an event took place by sending out a pulse of light or radio wave. The light beam is partially reflected back, and the observer measures the time at which he receives the echo. The time of the event is then said to be the time halfway between the time at which the light beam was sent and the time at which the reflection was received back. The spatial distance of the event is half the time taken for this round trip of light multiplied by the velocity of light. Using this procedure, the observers who are moving relative to each other will assign different times and spatial positions to the same event. No

particular observer's measurement would be more correct than any other; all the measurements would be harmonised in a single scheme. Each observer can work out what time and position any other observer will assign to that event, provided he knows the other observer's relative velocity. In this way the different local times or the perspectival times can be harmonised within a single universal time.[26]

Now, can we equate the tension between private-cum-perspectival time and public time in Wittgenstein's philosophy with the physicist mechanism of harmonising local times with universal times as Hintikka suggests? The first resistance to Hintikka's proposal would be that Einstein's scheme seems to presuppose pre-given empty slots of space and time in which events are situated. Without this presupposition, one cannot identify the event against which the light beam bumps, or what it hits again on its way back. The enigmas that arise with respect to spatial measurement at least on three levels arise here as well. Just as the measuring scale for determining spatial dimensions cannot feel the beginning and end point of the object, the light beam cannot by itself get automatically connected with the first and the second event without the observer herself reckoning them as conceptually connected. Matching the beginning and end points recorded by the clock with that of the setting-off event and the target event too requires a conceptual correlation—one cannot presume *events* as pre-conceptually given and matched in the relevant manner.

Within the discipline of physics itself, the term 'event' has been customarily defined as something that happens at a particular point *in* space and *at* a particular time.[27] But physics is not always sensitive to the problem of how, in the absence of space and time as all-pervading and static containers, an

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[26] Needless to say, these commonplace details are available in the usual materials pertaining to the philosophy of physics. I have drawn the present facts from Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time* (London: Bantam Books, 1995), p. 22.

[27] Ibid., pp. 22, 24.

event can still be demarcated in the idiom of containment, as obtaining *in* space and time. Physics goes on to claim that events can be specified by four numbers or coordinates—the three well-defined coordinates of space and the measure of time. And physics can float several options among these coordinates, i.e., instead of using the predicates 'between x miles north and y miles west of Piccadilly', one can use 'x and y miles north-east and north-west of Piccadilly'; instead of using seconds, one can use a combination of seconds and light-seconds. But such exercises too seem to be committed to pre-given and cohesive chunks of space and time, serving as limiting points from which the task of activating the different optional sets of identifying coordinates can take off. I venture to suggest that the way in which light is demonstrated to be the fourth dimension of space in the special theory of relativity also betrays space-time as the thin residual husks of objects and events—an implication that flagrantly goes against their professed pronouncements. The propagation of light is usually shown by diagrams like the one presented in Figure 5.1, where time travels vertically upwards (and the other spatial dimensions are shown horizontally, or ignored, or depicted by the laws of perspective).
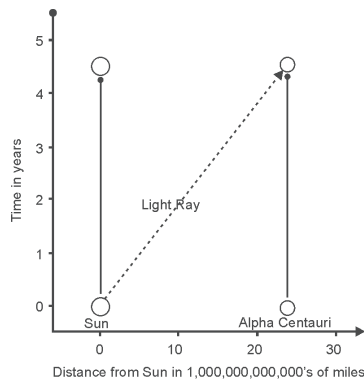
Figure 5.1

Source: Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time*, chapter 2, http://www.fisica.net/relatividade/stephen_hawking_a_brief_history_of_time.pdf (accessed 31 May 2018).

If a pulse of light is emitted at a particular point of time (marked by a clock) in a particular space, then in the course of its travel it will spread out as a sphere of light whose size and position are independent of the source. After one-millionth of a second, the radius of that sphere will be 300 metres, after two-millionths of a second, it will be 600 metres. This process can be depicted as similar to the way ripples spread out on the surface of water when a stone is thrown into it. The analogy might be taken further by recasting the flat surface of the pond in three dimensions. Figures 5.2 and 5.3 demonstrate how the analogy is worked out.
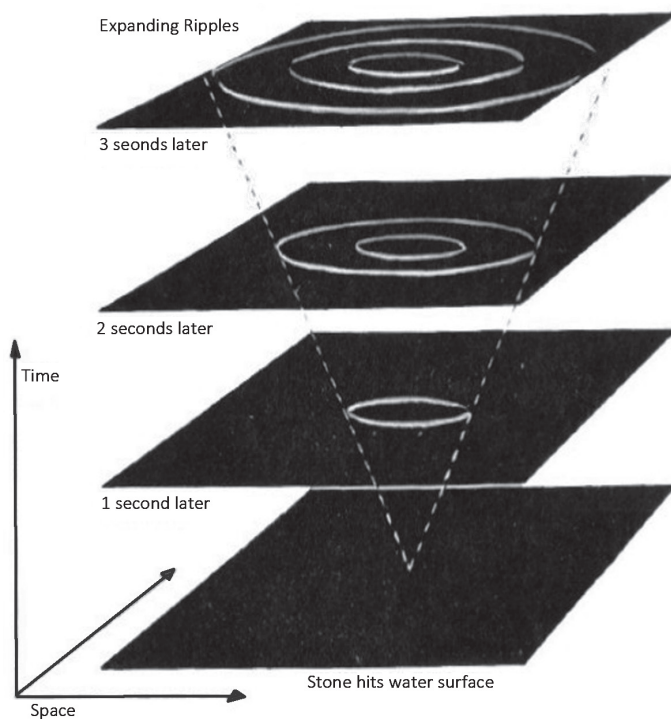
Figure 5.2

Source: Hawking, *A Brief History of Time*, chapter 2, Figure 2.3, http://www.fisica.net/relatividade/stephen_hawking_a_brief_history_of_time.pdf (accessed 31 May 2018).
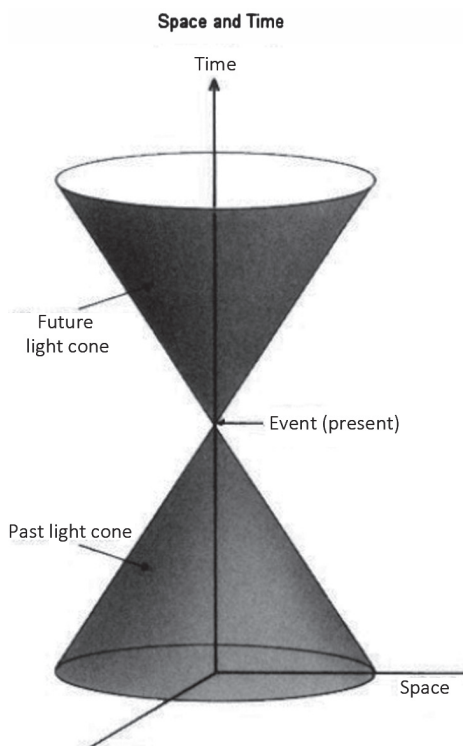
Figure 5.3

Source: Hawking, *A Brief History of Time*, chapter 2, Figure 2.4, http://www.fisica.net/relatividade/stephen_hawking_a_brief_history_of_time.pdf (accessed 31 May 2018).

This style of picturisation opens up some interesting routes of thought that may be developed to challenge the very foundationalist framework of physics. First, the passage of light in the forward direction is compared with the flow of a river, coupled with the idea that even when the river takes a U-turn it is not the same flow that is reverted. It is on the analogy of the irreversible flow of a river or of light that the irreversible flow of time is constructed. Second, along with each ripple of the pond or each ticking space of the second hand of the clock, we dissect or scrape out one fragmentary layer of the object or event and

set a one–one correlation amongst them. The irreversibility of this process holds no more mystery than the irreversibility of the process of counting. For as numbers go on yielding unit after unit, the very nature of the scheme of producing homogeneous repetition in the forward direction rules out a backward trip. This applies even in the case of a descending series, for counting backwards is a process of irreversible reversal. The physical process of counting itself starts from our body—seeks to find space outwards; but it is empirically impossible for the counting operation to get back into the body, if it is to preserve the separable identity of each unit in an indefinite progression.

Third, the description of this propagation of light is itself phrased in temporal idioms. For instance, Hawking speaks of the light beam as ripples spreading out, getting bigger 'as time goes on'. This amply shows that the travel of time in the vertical direction as a progressive enlarging of the radius cannot explain time in a non-circular fashion. This inbuilt circularity in the physical and physicist theory of time as well its essential depiction and dissection in terms of homogeneous spatial units of the clock shows why and how Wittgenstein might attempt to outgrow the scientistic scheme of space and time underlying human actions. It is said that for every event, whether it is a voluntary action or an involuntary happening of an organic or inorganic body, we may construct a light-cone. One may construct these light-cones from all possible positions and directions, and all these cones may be said to constitute a set of all possible rays of light in space-time emitted at that event. This account presupposes events located in space-time in a way that all possible positions from which one can identify them are charted out. On the Wittgensteinian account, on the other hand, it is not that one independently locates events and then charts out all possible light-cones that can spread towards it. Rather, to locate events in the physicist framework is already to have constructed it in terms of past and future light-cones.

Fourth, it is not difficult to see how the imageries of time travel in terms of flat surfaces of enlarging radii, correlated

with progressively smaller or infinitesimal units, are in tune with logical atomism as well with the neurological theories of reference. The more we are programmed into thinking of time as infinitesimal—hiding infinitely smaller components within its inner reserves—the greater is the parallel tendency to construct our cognition and action into thinner and thinner layers, each allotted to a millisecond. Then the neurological theories come to be allotted the task of finding these microscopic layers and showing how these layers are again woven together in full-bodied perception. And this trend dates back to the theories of logical atomism, where cognitions and actions were sought to be built up from momentary sense-data—a narration which is very much depictible in terms of thin layers correlated with each radius of the light-cone or each ripple of water.

Lastly, in spite of all these dissensions between the respective approaches of Einstein and Wittgenstein, and our reservations about Hintikka's reading of the issue, it is extremely important to give due appreciation to Hintikka observation on what he calls the 'tacit relation' between Wittgenstein and Einstein's notion of time, centring especially on the problem of local or perspectival times vis-à-vis physical or absolute time. Einstein's theory that local times cannot be combined into one absolute time stands on a par with Wittgenstein's insight that there cannot be a unique public system to serve as a reality that our language is about. Hintikka goes on to state that '… the public system cannot be the primary one epistemologically, even if it may be the basic one in the semantics of language.'[28] We can venture to read this observation of Hintikka as suggesting that time, or rather the correlative notion of time and light, is a cardinal metaphor that both physics and the philosophy of language have come to share. The absolute status of time should be seen not as an ontologically given container, but as a uniform numerical practice enabled by the absolute speed of light. Similarly, the need for a public time frame in the context of the philosophy of

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[28] Hintikka, 'Wittgenstein on Being and Time', p. 17.

language is not an ontological but a semantic requirement for communication. We should add that this semantic requirement is an architectonic requirement characteristic of the language-game of reference, where the projected identity is only fleshed out in and through the differences of descriptions.

The next section explores some of the deviant linguistic practices figuring in Wittgenstein's writings that challenge the postulate of a universal space-time framework. These examples should let us appreciate that while we need to understand deviances in the light of a shared commonality of an overarching frame of space and time, such postulates are only guide rails that are *presumed* to lead us further than they reach. Wittgenstein adds: [But there *is* nothing there, but there isn't *nothing* there!] (*RFM* V-45; also see *PI* 217). The matter has been discussed previously in chapter I.

4. Wittgenstein on Different Modes of Enacting Space and Time

It is not difficult to anticipate what Wittgenstein's treatment of time-language would be like: he would no doubt break through the surface grammar of the propositions on time, exposing the manner in which the superficial similarities inflate into a false ontology. He draws attention to some apparently similar structures—'I have a coin in my hand,' 'I have a pain in my hand,' and 'I have some time in my hand'—which are sharply disanalogous as regards their philosophical grammar. Pain and time, unlike a coin, are not objects; time like pain-sensations is not a something, it is not a nothing either (*PI* 102). The conjuring of time as one-dimensional space is often fuelled by such uses as 'He slept from noon to night,' 'He slept from Kolkata to Bardhaman.'

Visions flying past as seen from a train, looking at the flow of a river, etc., evoke imageries of a different kind of space that tends to flow only forward, that which is irreversible.[29] In all these

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[29] Ambrose, *Wittgenstein's Lectures*, p. 13.

cases, we can make internal contrasts—we can contrast the flow of one river with another, or with the banks that are stationary; we can contrast the images flying past the train window with the seeming immobility of the compartment, or contrast the two sets of images on either side of the train. But when we seek to override these contrastive juxtapositions or relational interplays and assume apparently absolutist expressions, framing questions about the single flow of time itself—not in relation to anything else, asking from where it comes and to where it goes—we are lapsing into the unpalatable options of either a contradiction or an infinite regress. In all these cases Wittgenstein would say that the wheels of language come to a stop, the cogwheels do not mesh (*PI* 38, 613). Once we envisage time as a single substantive, a substantive that nevertheless flows, and that too in an irreversible direction, we get drawn into insoluble puzzles and contradictions about measuring time.[30] It is only when it makes some sense to outline an object, trace out its dimensions, that it also makes sense to speak of measuring it, correlate its beginning and end points with the scale, and proceed with the subsequent operation of counting the units of the scale. This enigmatic stretch of a one-dimensional space—whose past is gone by, whose future is yet to come and whose present is extensionless—is not conceivably amenable to measurement. Obviously Wittgenstein is referring to the notional absurdity of phenomenological time or private time that is sought to be withdrawn from all modes of activation, from all language-games.

Wittgenstein gives an imaginative illustration to refute the persisting notion of time as a one-dimensional flow consisting of bare homogeneous slots. He brings forth the example of a river with a number of logs flowing on it and banging against its banks.[31] The bangs are separated by equal or unequal

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[30] Wittgenstein describes St Augustine as pondering on the possibility of measuring time on the model of measuring space (*PI* 89).

[31] Ambrose, *Wittgenstein's Lectures*, p. 13-14.

intervals, or one set of bangs is twice as fast as another set. But this equality or inequality of intervals cannot be matched with the way they are measured by a clock, i.e., the shorter intervals cannot be matched with a smaller number of ticks, nor can the larger intervals be synchronised with a larger number. There is nothing like the flat length or interval that is out there as the time difference between two events, i.e., the two bangs in the present instance. The phrase 'length of the interval' is determined by how we quantify or conceptualise the events; there are no abstract, empty time slots in which events are situated, leaving a blank interval between the two. The rhythm felt between two bangs happening at a very short interval gives it a very different character, rendering it incomparable with a long (non-rhythmic) interval supposed to differ only in degree.

Now, would Davidson insist that the two modes of measuring time with the same set of fast bangs—(*a*) simply calibrating the bangs with the ticks of a clock devoid of any rhythm; (*b*) making a visual representation of the rhythmic set as contrasted with the non-rhythmic set of bangs—are extensionally the same action *x* having the same space-time boundary, though conceived under two alternative descriptions, or caused by two alternative intentions? (see chapter IV, sections 1.5–1.7). Davidson could indeed give a simple affirmative answer, or might adopt a more adventurous denial that would attempt to recast the second mode of measurement as having a different extensional identity—as absorbing a more expansive location and a longer duration within its folds. In line with the second response, he could also say that the actions of making ambulatory movements in the forward direction either with the intention of testing the soil or receiving remote signals in a group activity have different space-time identities. Obviously the second response too would be based on the same containment model of space-time; it would just redefine the event in terms of a different container or a different extensional identity, demanding a different set of descriptional options whereby all of them (like the logs) would be banging against not the riverbank but the hard, quantitative

outline of the underlying action, or *x*. I argue that both responses are arbitrary: the first is a forced quantification of the space-time metaphor, and the second always feeds on a prefabricated set of alternative intentions and intensions designed to meet the same location and duration.

5. Wittgenstein on Colours: The Dynamics of Action in Perception

As a strategy for winding up this work, I dwell on the containment model of space-time with respect to colour— one of the most obstinate claimants for the position of pre-conceptual referents. This may be looked upon as a conscious strategy to haul up the opposition to an idealised pinnacle so that the anti-foundationalist exercise of its dismissal stamps a fully saturated and irrevocable signature, stalling all attempts at a foundationalist retreat. While Alva Noe's comprehensive and resourceful analysis of the phenomenon of enacting colours[32] furnishes a valuable guide and groundwork for systematising Wittgenstein's entries on this subject, it will ultimately be overtaken by more provocative lines of argument suggested in Wittgenstein's writings.

Noe projects the qualia theory on colour as an effective contrast point against the enactive view. In qualia theory, it is the experienced quality of a colour, say redness, that is immediately revealed as the transparent sensual property partly fixing what it is to have the experience of red. Two persons can have identical sensori-motor skills and behavioural dispositions and yet experience a different quale; a person can have normal sensori-motor skills and yet lack colour-experience. Thus, on the qualia theory, colour-experience can be fully delinked from sensori-motor skills. Noe wishes to refute the qualia theory and consolidate the enactive theory by exhibiting the sensori-motor profile of colour.

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[32] I have relied heavily on Noe's *Action in Perception*, chapter 4, to write this section.

First, to record some obvious facts: The look of the colour varies as it moves in relation to the light source: e.g., when we rotate a tomato, the part facing the light will look brighter than the part facing away from it. Secondly, even when the lighting conditions are the same, the colour varies as the perceiver moves in relation to the object. As we move in relation to a clean new automobile, or as it moves in relation to us, the specular highlights on its surface vary visibly. Further, when the lighting and the viewing geometry are kept constant, the hue and brightness of an object change with respect to the chromatic properties of the surrounding and contrasting objects. White ceilings of a house surrounded by lawns on a sunny day may appear green, or as Wittgenstein himself illustrates (in *Remarks on Colour*, para 5)—a piece of white paper kept beside different pieces of different colours is the lightest, but looks grey beside a block of snow. A cross cut out from greyish paper and kept on a yellow background looks violet, while on a violet background the same piece of paper looks yellowish and lighter. Noe reports Albers describing colours as acting on each other by 'pulling' or 'pushing' 'each other into different appearances (both towards greater difference and greater similarity').[33]

Wittgenstein offers more radical colour adventures in terms of their internal configurations of lightness and darkness of shade. On a palette filled with different pigments, white is the lightest colour, while the blue pigment when spread on white paper to depict the sky can be said to get its lightness from, and in this sense be lighter than, the whiteness of the paper (*Remarks on Colour*, para 2). Again, when a kettle on the burning stove becomes red-hot and then brown-hot and finally white-hot, we can say that white is darker than red and brown. The spirit of these illustrations is akin to the following instance offered by Noe: a TV screen in its non-light-emitting status is of a grey-green colour, but then how does this lightless grey-green colour of the screen produce an image of darkness, say that of a black

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[33] Ibid., p. 126.

coat (which is obtained only by the screen failing to emit light)—black being decidedly darker than grey-green? This effect, Noe points out, is produced by the presence of contrasting lights. We can repeat the following quotation from *Remarks on Colour* (I 61, already quoted in chapter II, section 1.3): 'We are inclined to believe the analysis of our colour concepts would lead ultimately to the *colours of places* in our visual field, which are independent of any spatial or physical interpretation; for here there is neither light nor shadow, nor highlight, etc....' We can deploy this observation to suggest that for Wittgenstein, there is no pure geometry of space underlying the lighting conditions, positions of the viewer and the objects, or the chromatic quality of the objects: the colours do not push or pull each other *in* a geometrical space-container, but carve out new spaces in and through various kinds of dynamic interactions.

Noe illustrates the manner in which green grass, when lit strongly by the sun in certain directions, takes the shade of dusty yellow so much so that had a congenitally blind person been suddenly endowed with eyesight, he would conceptualise the grass as partially green and partially yellow. It is only by continuous experiments and shifting positions and comparison with other plants of a stable yellow colour that one comes to perceive the enduring colour of grass vis-à-vis its variation patterns. Here we need to add that finding the relative stability of the so-called uniform or real colour of the object, as is revealed in the minimal intermediary distance between the perceiver and the object affording the least interaction with the viewer and the surrounding objects, is not a passive representation—rather, it is a passive mode of enaction.

This brings us to the phenomenon of colour constancy, i.e., to the status of the phenomenon where we experience a wall illuminated unevenly in different sections as nevertheless uniform in colour. Noe holds that the problem of colour constancy is to be framed as a problem regarding perceptual presence, or rather *amodal* presence: we *amodally* experience the wall as uniform in colour though it is visibly differentiated with different colours

across different surfaces—it is present but absent, like the back portions of the tomato or the occluded parts of the cat. Peacock holds that the experience of the uniform colour of the wall across all the differentiated sections of its surface constitutes the representational content of experience, whereas the varying colour impressions in different sections belong to the qualitative or sensational properties of experience.[34] Noe does not agree with this theory. He says that we experience both the uniform as well as the varying facets of shape and colour: when we see a plate, we see the circular in the elliptical, we see the invariant colour in the apparent variability. I would prefer to deploy Wittgenstein as a strategy to push Noe's view to a radical extent in its linguistic or rather semantic counterpart. The presence of uniformity in the shifting variance is the same as the formal or architectonic presence of a so-called stable reference in the backdrop of varying descriptions, where the projected invariability of the reference (here, the uniform colour) is spaced out in and through the varying descriptions—the varying colours.

Noe distinguishes between two kinds of sensori-motor activities—*movement*-dependent and *object*-dependent—both of which are said to determine the experience of colour. The former is a pattern of dependence between sensory stimulation on the one hand and movements of the body on the other. It is the way sensory stimulation is affected by the perceiver's geometrical relation to the object (the perceiver's manipulations like turning it towards the source of light, moving her eyes in all directions keeping the object in a fixed position, etc.). In the second case, it is the movement of our eyes that produces the characteristic changes in stimulations—movement to the right, say away from the surface, stimulates a specific region, viz., the parafoveal region of the retina rather than the foveal region, the former containing more rods than the wavelength-sensitive cones. Further, the eye movements across blue, green and red objects, i.e., across objects disposed to reflect large amounts of

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[34] Noe presents Christopher Peacock's theory at ibid., p. 128.

short, medium and long wavelengths of light respectively, are strikingly different. This is because the yellow pigment in the eye (technically called the *macula lutea*) absorbs a greater amount of short-wavelength light entering into the eye than light of longer wavelength. The eye movement allowing the light to fall on the central retina causes a *yellowing* of the colour spectrum, causing the object to take on a predominantly yellowish hue—an effect which is stronger for blue objects than it is for red. Thus, for Noe, in the perception of colour, the eye-brain figures as a visual hand. The movements of the hand over an object depends upon the way the hand is built; similarly, the movements of the eye-brain produce sensory effects that are determined by the way the eye-brain—along with its internal structure and components like the rods and three kinds of cones—is built.

Again, it emerges that even Noe's enactive theory of colour is constrained by the underlying geometry of space, the enaction being dependent upon the pre-given, pre-actional status of fovea, rods and cones and the light waves—while I have been attempting to construct a narrative where this dynamic process and interaction do not happen *in* space, but the interaction carves out space in terms of objects and their mutual interrelations. Just as the utterance of words with the purpose of representing objects is an action whereby the status of the represener and the represented is constituted, similarly our eye-brain and the coloured objects too are constituted not prior to, but in and through actions.

Noe rightly points out against the qualia theory that our experiences are incurably holistic; what is given in experience is never an individual atom like qualia, but a structured field. He rightly insists that the content of experience is virtual *all the way in*, which implies that although the whole facing side of the tomato is present to the perceiver in contrast to the far side which is out of view, the perceiver can no more take in the whole of the facing side at once in consciousness. This shows that we cannot divide experience into two parts—appearance and reality, the occurrent part and a merely virtual or potential

part. At any level of analysis, it always presents a structured field that extends outwards, spilling over any strict givenness of *now*—there is always scope within experience for shifts of attention. One can neither embrace our visual space in a single act of consciousness, nor grasp a single sense-datum—a single patch of red, or a shiver of cold in a well-defined enclosure. Russell's insistence that we can hold a sense-datum for two to three moments[35] clearly betrays that all we can do is to run through features serially; but the moment we stop and try to make a specific feature the sole object of our consideration— e.g., this shade of red or this sensation of cold—it outstrips our range of absorption. Noe compares this act of attending to the strictly given with that of being engulfed by a giant grey fog—undifferentiated and homogenised, affording no internal structure or variation, covering the whole of space and allowing nothing outside. Yet this is not a case of being confined to the strictly 'given'; the confinement spills out of itself to go beyond its strict enclosure—there is fog upward, there is fog downward, there is fog beyond. Anything being insulated in a single space or a single sense-datum makes sense only when it imbibes an attempt to enact this insularity by pushing beyond the enclosing walls to go beyond. A person constrained to see the world in fragmented slivers through the horizontal slits in a wall does not enjoy any barely given sense-data (the privileged favourites of the logical atomists).

Similar remarks apply to Jones's one-dimensional worm moving through a one-dimensional tunnel, or the Flatlanders taking a position from the edge of the table and looking at the flat cut-out pieces of paper scattered on its surface. These contrivances fail to make a case in favour of the barely given sense-data—the supposedly insular and extensionless bits of disjointed space. The purported one-dimensionality of the perceiver's body is again a conceptual error—again grafted

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[35] Russell says this in the section titled 'Discussion' after Lecture II in *Philosophy of Logical Atomism*.

in the containment model of space. It vainly attempts an impossible combination of two spaces—the first space as a single, indivisible and full-bodied continuum, another space containing the one-dimensional bodies of the Flatlanders, where the sensory apparatus of the second space is said to miss or truncate the first fuller space. But Jones does not address the pertinent question as to how the perceiver's body can be contained in a one-dimensional space wrenched away from the continuum. And if Jones permits the talk of the one-dimensional perception as being explicable in terms of a blocked vision, he also has to admit that this is not an ontological blockage of a disjoined space, but an enaction of blocking. Being enveloped in a grey fog is not passive confinement *in* a space, but enacting that space in one's attempt to break through it. A space-warped person does not bump his head against an end of space, but enacts those impenetrable ends in his attempt at penetration. Wittgenstein's thought experiments with people to see colours in binary fractions of what we think to be intermediate shades, or people who have an absolute pitch (discussed in *Zettel* and presented in chapter II, section 3 of this work) will be more appropriate to settle the issue.

Noe treats Wittgenstein's distinction between grammatical and empirical propositions about colour as a distinction between the logical grammar of colours themselves and the colours of actual objects. He holds that the proposition that there is no reddish green is a grammatical one about the formal or geometrical colour-space underlying different wavelengths; and thus it is a proposition that sets the paradigm of the existence of a geometrical gap between red colour-space and green colour-space. But empirical propositions about coloured objects and their surroundings—like the proposition that every object gets darker when it moves into a shadow—is about real objects in space. Here I beg to differ from Noe with respect to this reading of Wittgenstein. I suggest that for Wittgenstein, the formal colour-space addressed by grammatical propositions cannot be given the status of an underlying geometry. Rather, paradigmatic

colour-space is spread out in actions, i.e., in enacting that colour-space in terms of actual practices with our colour-profile of the object and the effects of light and shadow.

Noe says that our experience of colours is shaped by the implicit grasp of their positions *in* colour-space. We experience them as imbued with possibilities of variations, in possessing degrees of freedom in a space of phenomenological possibilities. When we see a red book, we do not see the rest of colour-space, but our sense of the presence of that larger colour-space contributes to what our experience of red is like. Noe's account of our experience of colour as being situated *in* space, or our sense of red being *in* a relational network of a larger space, is decidedly against the atomistic theory of colour, where colour figures as bare patches in disjoined private spaces, standing in need of integration into a public framework. But it is not clear to what extent Noe's talk of experience being situated *in* space and our sense of larger space is framed within the containment model of Newton, or whether his narration allows a transition to, and treatment within, the Einsteinian model along with its liberations and constraints.

Wittgenstein clearly indicates that the comparison of colours with the points of a scale labours under the containment metaphor of space, as if the numerical quantity of wavelengths underlies different colours like different spatial containers of different sizes. It is as if the specific number of primary colours along with their internal directions are all etched out in the ethereal space-container, real colours being the materialisation of an immaterial space; as if the grammatical statements on colours trail behind these real spatial structures. The difference between 'Black is not red' and 'Black is not abracadabra' cannot be understood unless red already obtains in the place where black is described. Black and red can be conceived not as lumps of space with a geometrical void in between, but as black that has already swerved away or spaced itself from red. Seeing black in front of me and expecting red, is different from seeing black and expecting blue. Seeing a colour always happens in a

framework of other colours, with internal routes of transition set in different modes of proprioception.

We have already seen how Wittgenstein's treatment of measurement breaks through the containment model—the model where the space of the measuring scale is expected to replicate the space of the measured, both spaces supposed to corporealise the incorporeal space-container. Thus what we have in measurement is an automatic coincidence between two containers already given out there. The significance of the following observation lies in its resistance to this model: '[t]he yardstick must already be applied, I cannot apply it how I like; I can only pick out a point on it' (*PR* p. 76). One cannot join one space with another space crossing over a vacuum; similarly, one cannot be surrounded by an absolute silence which one can choose to join or not join with auditory space (*PR* p. 77). All talk of silence, whether in the Tractarean framework or in any other, is within an integrated realm where silence is opposed to sound. Let us consider these two routes of navigation—the normal navigation of grey to its lighter and darker shades, or to other colours, or the colour-blind navigation exclusively within different shades of grey. Adopting either of these routes is not a voluntary choice between a more or less expansive route, by the normal or the colour-blind perceiver respectively—where both options obtain *within* the same space-container. On the contrary, these two modes of colour perception are two modes of enacting colour.

Wittgenstein further explains that one can construct a quadrangle such as in Figure 5.4 (see next page). As red and yellow are placed at right angles to each other (and so are blue and green), this does not mean that we can bisect it and the adjacent segment to arrive at another 90-degree angle to get at orange on the one hand, and red-blue (RB) and yellow-green (YG) on the other, as neat quantitative productions of the two respective bisections. Such a putative production would look like the illustration in Figure 5.5 (see next page).

Red   Blue

Yellow   Green

Figure 5.4

Red   (RB)   Blue

Orange

Yellow   (YG)   Green
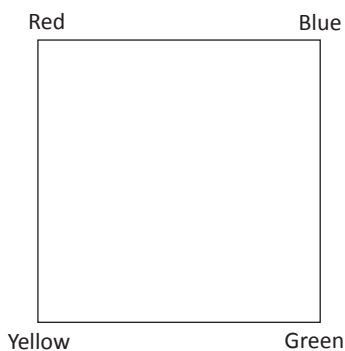
Figure 5.5

Putative bisection of Red-Yellow straight line yielding Orange;
putative bisection of Red-Blue line to yield RB, putative
bisection of Yellow-Green line to yield YG.

But that one cannot do so, that the metaphor of an angle collapses here, is not due to a pre-conceptual external constraint—i.e., it is not due to the constraint of four primary colours that are mutually exclusive, and intermediate shades rolling out a slippery zone and thereby resisting the same kind of geometrical scaffolding as one performs with the four primary colours (*PR* p. 277).[36]

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[36] Figures 5.4 and 5.5 have been constructed in accordance with Wittgenstein's arguments in PR, p. 277.

The traditional colour scheme ultimately has the topological structure of an octahedron, which is a spatial model of expressing ordinary language in a logically purified mode. Tine Wilde[37] points out that Wittgenstein discards Runge's model of the colour wheel and adopts the colour octahedron model from Höfler,[38] who in his turn borrowed it from Hering.[39] Höfler proposed the octahedron model depicted in Figure 5.6 as
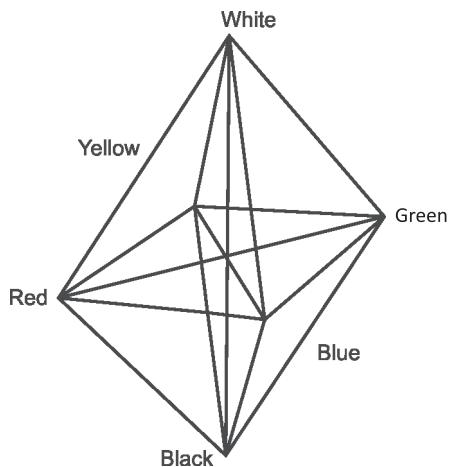
Figure 5.6

Source: Tine Wilde, 'The 4th Dimension', p. 284.

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[37] Tine Wilde, 'The 4th Dimension: Wittgenstein on Colour and Imagination', available at: sammelpunkt.philo.at:8080/1486/1/wilde. pdf (accessed 14 December 2017).

[38] Alois Höfler was an Austrian philosopher and educationist who produced two similar colour systems between 1883 and 1897. Wilde provides only some secondary references to Höfler in the following two works written in German: F. Gerritsen, Entwicklung der Farbenlehre (Göttingen, 1984); and J. Rothaupt, *Farbthemen in Wittgensteins Gesamtnachlass* (Weinheim: Beltz, 1996).

[39] Karl Ewald Konstantin Hering (1834–1918) was a German physiologist who did much research into colour perception and eye movements. Again, Wilde provides a secondary reference to Hering in L. M. Hurvich and D. Jameson, 'An Opponent-Process Theory of Color Vision', *Psychological Review*, vol. 64, no. 6 (1957), pp. 384–404.

grounded on the formula of opposition—red/green, blue/yellow and black/white. The octahendron in Figure 5.6 is definitionally created by connecting two congruent square pyramids at their bases. We can see its eight plane faces (all of which are equilateral triangles), twelve edges and six vertices—four of which meet at each vertex. This model is evidently based on the three pairs of colour opposition: red/green, blue/green and white/black. All basic colours (including green) are situated on unambiguous points at the corners of the base, while the white/black axis is at right angles to the base.

Wittgenstein proposes a new colour octahedron in the shape of a double cone that seeks to reshuffle the old grammatical space of colour (*PR* p. 278) (see Figure 5.7). For Wilde, the very fact that the black-white line is a little upward and downward is intended to show that this coordinate is situated in a different dimension. This itself has the following implications:
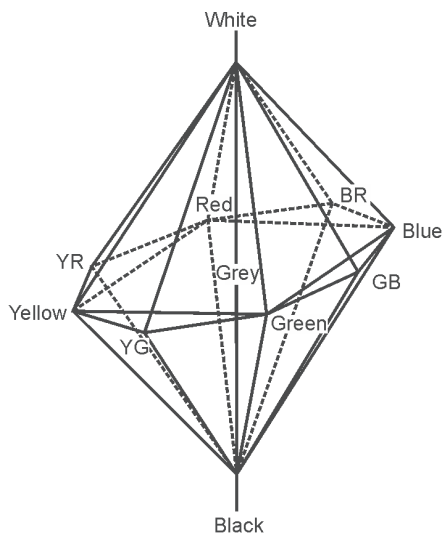
Figure 5.7

(a) The white-black line is not an overview of the mixed colours of black and white; it is rather a scale of colours *between* black and white.

(b) All saturated colours can be mixed white, grey tones and black—in this sense they can be placed between the opponent pairs of black and white.

So the grey scale, instead of being an overview—i.e., a space hovering over the basic and intermediate colours—seeks to merge the latter into itself; the opposition between black and red, yellow and blue is thereby dissolved. In the former model, the grey scale was placed in a dimension where black and white were not allowed to absorb light and thereby ossified into a saturated and opaque status.

Wittgenstein's new model of the double cone, or an eight-angled model instead of an octahedron, turns the square base into an octagon whereby the mixed colours are shown to be tending towards one or more basic colours. Thus, colour-terms turn out to be those which we use in our daily lives in an unlimited variety of cases. The octagon base also opens up alternative trajectories, from blue-red to blue and then to purple and then to orange—all those routes which were frozen by the previous square base.

The old octahedron model according to Wilde was an idealised system with three dimensions: (*a*) the opaque colours at the base; (*b*) the transparent mixed colours; and (*c*) the opaque black–white line. We can pertinently add that the old octahedron was embedded in the containment model of space-time. Wittgenstein should not be read as proposing a different model of containment, but as dissipating the model itself by activating a fourth dimension through the processes of reflection, glitter, shine and transparency of colours, which are shaped by different movements of our bodies. Roughly speaking, the difference between the two colour-spaces—the idealised colour system and the transparent colour-space—is to be played out in actions. Seeing a colour as opaque or as transparent, seeing it in

its surface dimension or its depth dimension, is seeing it under alternating aspects, which for Wittgenstein is not grounded upon separate psychological impressions, or physiological factors like different Gestalts or brain patterns, but virtually boils down to different modes of activity.

Noe is careful about preventing his enactive theory of colour from lapsing into behaviourism. He says that our practice of discriminating colours, i.e., our discriminatory behaviours, cannot emerge from nothing; they must flow from discriminating experience. We have already noted that to perceive something as looking red here and now, is to perceive it in a complex set of relationships of similarities and differences; in other words, it is to be already in possession of a range of discriminatory capacities. One cannot experience something as a particular shade of orange without being able to discriminate it from green, as more yellow than red, and as lighter than a dark shade of blue. To experience something as a determinate shade of green is not to knock against an isolated patch, but to be disposed to blend it with one background and see it jumping out against a different one. And disposition to such practices, again, is to be set out in terms of counterfactuals. These counterfactuals would have to use uniquely referring expressions like proper names, definite descriptions, indexicals and demonstratives pertaining to the perceiver's body, the particular shade of colour, a particular location, etc. However, none of these expressions would capture the Kripkean transworld identity. As already noted, for Wittgenstein, descriptions of actions are verbal behaviours that do not trail behind pre-linguistic brute movements, but are sophisticated extensions of non-verbal behaviours. Acts of discriminating colour-experiences, colour behaviours and colour descriptions are all blended into an immaculate whole, affording no possibility of being splintered into a mechanism where language and behaviour are grounded on a pre-linguistic reality. Given this seamless complex of behaviour, experience and language in Wittgenstein's thought, the traditional charge against behaviourism—the charge of

incompletability and circularity—cannot hold ground. Both the behaviourists and the anti-behaviourists thrive on the faulty presupposition of a pre-behavioural reality: the former accept it indirectly in its denial, while the latter let it in with a direct acceptance. Thereby both parties effectually validate the patent charge against behaviourism, viz., that one cannot dismiss the mentalistic character of experiences in favour of behaviours without presupposing precisely that which is claimed to be exhaustively reducible to behaviours. Wittgenstein does not deny mental concepts like images, feelings, will, emotions, etc., nor does he grant them an independently immaculate status, but blends all of them into an indissoluble union.

Humans can see colours that some animals like dogs cannot see; pigeons on the other hand are pentachromatics and thus perceive colours that humans do not. Noe says that these phenomena in themselves are not reasons for doubting the independent reality of colours. If all sentient beings were to disappear from earth there would be no colour-experiences, but there would be colours. I however would wish to maintain that pigeons with more wavelength-sensitive cones and more pigments are able to thicken out or extend the colour-space in newer directions, and if there were no sentient beings in the world, the colour-space would simply not be carved out in the way it is.

Foundational theories of colour may assume either an externalist or an internalist version: they can claim definite colour-spaces containing demarcated wavelengths of light, or they can put the entire burden on our nervous system, striving to explain colour opponency by the fact that activation of red processing requires a corresponding neural structure which in its turn deactivates the specially allotted architecture for green processing. Noe neither accepts the complete adequacy of the neurological foundation of colour, nor does he consider it as enabling a dismissal of their external reality. He describes the best-developed version of colour physicalism as holding that colours are *surface spectral reflectance* (SSR), viz., that

property by virtue of which an object is disposed to reflect a given proportion of incident light at each wavelength in a visible spectrum. The obvious shortfall of this physicalist version of colour is that it does not leave any room for an intrinsically phenomenal character about it. This shortfall is revealed in the metameric pairs, i.e., objects that look to be the same colour but differ in SSR and thus differ in the way they act on physical light. For any object of any given SSR, there is an indefinite number of objects with different SSRs that nevertheless are disposed to have the same colour look in a broad range of conditions. Now let us note that the case of metameric pairs of coloured objects has very significant implications for externalist versus internalist theories of reference. A pair of coloured objects producing the same observable property but with different physicalistic bases naturally reminds one of Putnam's water$_1$ (H$_2$O) and water$_2$ (XYZ) having different molecular structures but the same observable properties. Thus, atomic structure and the SSR must be mediated through the sense organs: the SSR would specifically be mediated through the cones, and the cones may not be sensitive to the differences between all the wavelengths (the small differences between long and medium wavelengths may be glossed over). The activity of a long-wavelength cone alone does not carry any information regarding whether the light stimulating it is of high or medium wavelength. Thus, a similar activity pattern of receptors may be produced by light of a vast range of spectral compositions, just as two liquids, two metals, a pair of two trees—the elm and the beech—may all have the same observable properties in spite of crucial differences in their physical identity.

To solve the problem of the metameric pair of coloured objects, some theorists have relaxed the physical demarcation of SSR with respect to the phenomenal look of colour. Instead of correlating a specific colour look with a unique SSR, they take a *type* of SSR as subsuming different tokens under itself— and all these tokens are assimilated not under the criterion of their physical or numerical identity, but simply under the fact

that under a range of circumstances, they tend to look the same way to normal perceivers. Thus, the members of an SSR type that constitute a given shade of red may not have much else in common—it may be an uninteresting class from the physical point of view, just as the commonality between water$_1$ (H_2O) and water$_2$ (XYZ) is uninteresting from the point of view of their physical identity. The common SSR type of the red colour look and the common water type of H_2O and XYZ are anthropocentric ones contingently determined by the perceptual system that we happen to have. Information about how things look play a role in picking out SSR *types*, but the types that are thus picked out are objects whose nature (and existence) are independent of how things look to us. Similarly, Kripke and Putnam would say, information about how the two liquids in Earth and Twin Earth, gold and fool's gold, elm and beech trees, are perceived in vision, touch, taste and smell, plays a role in *picking out* these objects, but the nature and existence of these twins thus picked out are determined by other factors (their chemical configuration and physical origin), independent of their observable qualities. One can venture to suggest that for Kripke and Putnam, 'SSR red type' would be a non-rigid designator picking out different tokens in different worlds endowed with different perceptual systems, while terms like 'the look of red' would be a rigid designator such as 'pain' is, for once the specific perceptual quality is incorporated in the referring expression, it cannot but pick out the same quality in all possible worlds.

Once the enactive theory of colour is framed within the externalist/internalist debate on reference, it invites a possible construal of how Wittgenstein would swerve from this dichotomy to open up a radical primacy of actions in constructing colours. I have noted that from Wittgenstein's perspective, both the externalists and the internalists labour under a common folly— that of presuming a pre-semantic chunk of reference existing out there. This is a debate in which the two contending positions revolve around the question of whether the reference is to be reached directly or through an intermediary route or sense.

None of these rival camps problematised the supposed semantic transparency of the referent. In fact, it was on the basis of this supposed transparency that externalists like Kripke and Putnam set up the epistemological gap between the speaker's perceptual mechanism and the referent, and were able to chalk out the several contingent and dispensable modes through which the referent is perceived in different worlds.

It is in this light that we should appreciate the following two observations, one by E. Thompson quoted by Noe, and another by Noe himself. Thompson says: 'There is no mapping from reflectant colour-space to phenomenal colour-space that is structure-preserving in a robust sense and that does not proceed through one of the perceiver-dependent psychological or psycho-physical colour-space.'[40] This statement is preceded by Noe's reminder that while the dimensions along which colours vary are three in number, the dimensions along which the ratios of incident to reflected light vary are infinite. It would not be far-fetched to graft these statements onto the three-tier telescopic model of Fregean sense/reference. Corresponding to the moon, the image of the moon on the object-glass of the telescope, and the image on the retina respectively, we have the pigment and the incident light as the referent, the reflected light as the sense, and the phenomenal colour-space as the tone. We can experimentally reshuffle Frege's referent (moon) (*a*); the image of the moon on the object-glass (descriptive bridge or sense) (*b*); and the image on the individual retina (tone) (*c*), as: (*c*) being the referent, (*a*) being the bridge and (*b*) being the tone. And we can try out similar endeavours with the colour scheme—the phenomenal colour-space can be recast as the reference, the pigment and the incident light as the sense, and the reflected light as the tone. We can privilege the phenomenal colour-space as the starting point of a discourse, play a perspectival game with it by projecting it as non-repeatable and unique, enacting a blockage of its distribution in space. This reference can be

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[40] Noe, *Action in Perception*, p. 153.

seen under the aspect of being produced by the pigment and incident light, while the reflected light may well be turned into an associated feeling which contingently accompanies the reference. And what I have been arguing all along is that getting the precisely intended structure, the precisely intended referent, description or meaning, is simply to act, to engage in verbal and non-verbal behaviours, and nothing beyond. Since neither the internalists nor the externalists appreciate the enactive character of reference or sense, they both accord a pre-linguistic ontology to the referent, here the pigment and the incident rays. While the internalist mediates the reference through an equally pre-semantic sense, the externalist blames the failure of one–one mapping between reflectant colour-spaces and phenomenal colour-space on an epistemological gap between the two—thus clearly betraying a pre-semantically given referent—on which the epistemological relativities are constructed. It should be clear by now that the three proposed spaces—the space of pigments and the incident waves, the reflectant space and the phenomenal space—are not tied into a deterministic scheme. Rather, they are all merged in action. To say that the ratios between incident light and reflected light vary at different wavelengths in infinite dimensions is to concede that one cannot chart out the total number of favourable and unfavourable conditions to avail of the numerical device of dividing one set by the other to compute the probability. Enumeration or quantification fails when one cannot adopt the stance of delineating a concept under clear boundaries, thus precluding the possibility of determining the number of its instances. As soon as we realise that the die, the act of throwing, the body movement, the muscle configuration, the intermediary air particles, wind movements, etc., cannot be brought under definite concepts, we come to realise the absurdity of quantifying the probability of getting a particular result—the head or tail position of the die, or any of its fine-tuned variations. To realise the indeterminacy of these concepts is to appreciate the primacy of actions, or at least to reckon that the actions do not trail behind chunks of objects like the

die or the light waves, etc. The act of quantifying favourable and unfavourable conditions—the die falling on the ground in a particular way, the movement of the wind, the arrangement of our muscles and motor organs—does not replicate pre-existing objects, but spaces out these objects and their numerical variations. Similarly, to concede that the incident light and the reflected light vary in infinite and thus incalculable dimensions is also to undercut an ontological foundation of colour (in the shape of definite SSR) and appreciate the primacy of actions.

Noe delivers a commendable philosophical performance against the physicalist-cum-externalist theory of colour, drawing our attention to the fact that the chromatic look of an object depends not only upon its propensity to reflect light and affect the photo-receptors, but also on changes in surrounding objects, and thereby on actions. However, Noe still seems to stick to an underlying colour-space containing variations and interaction of light waves figuring as the basis of actions. On the other hand, I have been trying to insist on a dynamic interaction between spaces that bursts forth from the demarcated pigments and wavelengths—and that *itself* constitutescolour. A radical stand on the primacy of actions does not merely end up showing that we act *in* an expansive network of spaces; rather, we enact that more expansive range of colour-spaces. It is not so much the presence of three different kinds of cone-cells containing specific pigments sensitive to light of three different ranges of wavelength (low, medium and high) that causes normal colour perception. It is not the case that each type of receptor (S cone, M cone and L cone) is isomorphically connected with a specific range of wavelengths; rather, each receptor is responsive to a wide range of wavelengths. For instance, the red receptor cone is maximally sensitive to the yellow-green wavelength, which is some way from the red in the spectrum. Perception of colour depends on an overlapping flow of these three systems, breaking through the putative atomicity of these pure, pre-given pigments so to speak, and animating each colour in a dynamic and holistic expense. Colours on final analysis are enacted.

We need to problematise in this light the standard descriptions of colour-blindness, viz., monochromacy and dichromacy. In the former, the person sees everything as if on a black-and-white television, and in the latter case (viz., red-green and blue-yellow blindness), the perceiver sees everything as a mixture of two primary colours. Now, it is not the absence of certain pigments in the cone-cells, but rather their lack of activation in terms of a more pervasive and richly diversified space that constitutes colour-blindness. These cases are a form of inactivation. For instance, blue-yellow colour-blindness is a phenomenon where the short-length sensitive cones are inactivated, whereby the differences between short wave (blue) and long wave (red) are smoothed out. We should rather say that the absence of specific cone pigments is to be read as an inactivation of the cones whereby it blocks the overlapping flow of light from one wavelength to another, and this constitutes the failure to carve out a more pervasive space that is more richly layered in its depth and dimensions. This is betrayed even in the standard phraseologies in which 'deuteranomaly' (green weakness) is described: the medium wavelength is said to be *shifted* to the red end resulting in a reduction of sensitivity in the green area of the spectrum, or the hues in the red, orange, yellow, green region of the spectrum appear somewhat *shifted* towards green.[41] These spatial idioms should encourage us to suggest that colour-blindness, in so far it smoothes out the distinction between two dimensions (the respective wavelengths of red and green), is neither omitting nor truncating real chunks already contained *in* space, any more than the *koopamanduk* does. We should read the spatial idioms and the frequently used expression of 'inactivation' in standard descriptions of colour-blindness in favour of our 'enactive' reading of Wittgenstein, namely, that this inactivation is not a blockage of space but a way of actively spacing out the spatial blockage itself.

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[41] I have drawn the relevant materials on colour-blindness from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Color_blindness (accessed 15 December 2017).

In the context of explaining the relational character of colour, Wittgenstein comments that a person, say with red-green blindness, 'has a different colour-system'; he is like a man whose head was fixed in one position and so had a different kind of space, since for him there would only be visual space and therefore, e.g., no 'behind'. These observations may well be taken to suggest that the red-green dichromat is unable to respond differently to the two different wavelengths and thus unable to navigate the flow from the green range to the red, crystallising the dynamic distinction into a static lump. Obviously, it is this blocked activity that Wittgenstein describes in terms of the perceiver's head being in a static position, and thus being confined to a two-dimensional visual space. But that he is not stuck against a two-dimensional flatness without depth and dimension is clearly suggested by Wittgenstein's next statement, viz., that this means not that for the perceiver the Euclidean (three-dimensional) space is bounded into two dimensions, but that he does not acquire the concept of three-dimensional space. In consonance with the track of the contentions in the present work, we should read these observations not as suggesting that a colour-blind person conceives space merely as a two-dimensional plane, this conception being coupled with involuntary movements of his body, causally generated—blindly and brutally—by a real three-dimensional space-container whose structure does not enter into the cognition. I have repeatedly insisted that just as a *koopamanduk*'s experience of being confined to the surrounding walls of the well camouflages the inbuilt extendibility of space by an active blockage, similarly the conflation and constriction of red/green colour-spaces is a different way of spacing out colour concepts—a different way of instantiating concepts through a strong resistance to instantiations and the dynamism of repetition (*PR*, p. 76). If we are able to appreciate that the normal vision of different perceivers does not operate with four terminal lumps of primary colours with real routes and gaps in between, rather that they carve out different spaces, we shall no longer look upon colour-blindness as epistemological gaps with

certain parts of a real colour-space given as a container. When Wittgenstein remarks that one can only search in a *space*, for only in a space does one stand in relation to where she is not (*PR* p. 77), it clearly indicates that one experiences constraint, constriction, blockage and passivity not as an absence of space, but *as* space.

Curing colour-blindness, too, does not consist in revealing to the patient a portion of space which was previously blocked out, but in training them to thicken out space into richer dimensions. In one particular instance, colour-blind persons were trained to use a software (called 'gnome-mag' and 'lib colour-blind') which consists in switching a colour filter off and on, choosing from a set of possible colour transformations in order to disambiguate them. This corrective mechanism is clearly an enactive one—it activates the perceiver in a more expansive and richly configured space of colour, unleashing their internal dynamics. When a cybernetic device called 'eyeborg' enables wearers to hear sounds representing different colours, or allows them to start painting in colours by memorising the sound corresponding to each colour, visual perception clearly glides into auditory perception, thus transforming colour distinctions into sound distinctions or recasting a specific colour into a dynamic synthesis of vision and audition.

Further, the fact that colour-blindness is highly sensitive to differences in material betrays colour as an enacted phenomenon. For example, a red-green colour-blind person who is incapable of distinguishing colours on a map printed on paper may have no such difficulty when viewing the map on a computer screen or television. In addition, some colour-blind people find it easier to distinguish problem colours on artificial materials, such as plastic or in acrylic paints, than on natural materials such as paper or wood. Third, for some colour-blind people, colour can only be distinguished if there is a sufficient 'mass' of colour: thin lines might appear black, while a thicker line of the same colour can be perceived easily. This is because the computer screen or TV screen allows a different curvature and a different pattern

of light reflection, enabling a different pattern of movements than is effected by the colour on flat one-dimensional paper. Secondly, in artificial media like plastic or acrylic paints, colour differences are less disturbed, dissipated or flattened out by change of positions or lighting, as is more liable to happen with natural media. A set of different colours having greater mass again allows a more pervasive and fine-tuned pattern of stability and differences within each colour, thus effecting the required distinction between two different colours, than is allowed with colour differences of lesser mass. That a dichromat does not miss a quantitative chunk of space (corresponding to the separate wavelengths of red versus green), but constructs a different space in a different manner, emerges from the fact that she can learn to use texture and shape clues to penetrate camouflages designed to deceive perceivers with normal vision. Here, the colour-blind person is actually trained to spread out a relatively homogeneous colour-space in varied directions and dimensions.

* * *

We never feel that our actions and conceptions are triggered off by an alien world, which we confront only at the edges, or that what are strictly given are only 'tiny picture[s] taken from an oblique, distorting angle'. We never feel that our bodies and limb movements confine us to a fragment of the full world— that we 'see space persepectively', or that 'our visual space is in some sense blurred towards the edges'. It is not that our conceptual or linguistic tools are left untouched by the world, going on in its own way. Rather, when we act or move about, we are immersed in the world, not discharged by its periphery. Here Wittgenstein says very explicitly that the self-evidence of the world is expressed in the very fact that language can and does only refer to it. This also corroborates our claim that for Wittgenstein there is neither any pre-semantic pristine atom which is to be referred in a privileged manner, nor does language characteristically fail to pick out reality as Quine claimed. It is

these explicit observations of Wittgenstein in his *Philosophical Remarks* (*PR* p. 80) that round off our reading of his enactive construction of space, time, perception and reference.

Reference and Truth

My central concern with reference makes it difficult to avoid a parallel engagement with the notion of truth. The lines of correlation between these two notions run in both directions—from reference to truth, as well as from truth to reference. With Frege, for instance, all terms having a referent call for the applicability of a predicate, truly or falsely, and thereby fall back on the prior notion of truth.[1] For Tarski on the other hand, truth is to be conceived neither as an indefinable or primitive notion like Frege, nor as correspondence with undivided facts (like some classical schools of realism), but in terms of the simpler notions of the *referent* and its *satisfaction* of predicates.[2] Further, this mutual dependence between the two notions of reference and truth flares up in another interesting area, where the debate between the substantive and the deflationary theories of truth shows a matching tension between the substantive and deflationary theories of reference. Against this backdrop, my investigation into Wittgenstein's views on reference has to incorporate the following concerns: First, whether and in what manner does Wittgenstein weave the notion of truth into his view of reference? Secondly, in view of his obvious resistance to the substantive theories of truth and reference, can any kind of affinity be said to emerge between the deflationary or verificationist models and his own non-foundational approach to these crucial notions? Lastly, we have to take Wittgenstein

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[1] Frege, 'On Sinn and Bedeutung', p. 157.

[2] A. Tarski, 'The Semantic Conception of Truth and the Foundations of Semantics', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 4, no. 3 (1944), pp. 341–76.

out of this dichotomy between the substantive and deflationary theories of truth and reference, cutting a path that is irreducibly his own, beyond the common and customary confusions, obligations and presuppositions.

This chapter navigates through the following stages. The first two sections present a neutral overview of the prevailing theories of truth, representing the opposition between the substantive and deflationist genres, respectively, taking note of the internal differences within each of these two archetypes. Sections 3 and 4 take up the standard objections customarily levelled against both these genres, in parallel introducing Michael Dummett's model of verificationism into the picture, specially focusing on his reservations against both these theories. In section 5, I turn to Wittgenstein's account of truth to play up the finer shades of his resistance to all these three categories of substantivism, deflationism and verificationism. My account on many occasions will draw from Putnam's commentary on how Wittgenstein cuts out an escape route from this traditional truth trichotomy, with a special entry as to how Wittgenstein's approach is best suited for the treatment of recalcitrant instances, viz., truth claims on statements about unobservable entities or those about the recognition transcendence of truth itself! It is obvious that, like the patent problem of reference of empty terms, truth predicates attached to such propositions throw a predictable challenge to all the truth theories; and we shall see that Wittgenstein had a markedly original style of handling such obstacles. The last two sections move from truth deflationism to reference deflationism, drawing their materials from Arvid Bave's paper: for both the exposition and criticism of all the standard models and schema of the latter theory, followed by what Bave claims to be a revised theory of reference. I wind up this chapter with a renewed construal of Wittgenstein's stand against Bave's position on reference, attempting to displace its acclaimed superiority, novelty and efficacy.

1. The Dominant Theories of Truth: A Brief Overview

Without exposure into how exactly truth had been sought to be ontologised or inflated under the different versions of substantivism, the main spirit of its opposition with the non-substantivist or deflationary theories cannot be appreciated. As is well known, there are three substantive notions of truth—correspondence, coherence and pragmatism—all of which have both an old, classical version as well as respective neo-classical developments.[3]

1.1 *Truth as Correspondence*

Interestingly, Moore and Russell—the primary upholders of the classical correspondence theory—did not, at least in the early phase of their philosophical career, define truth to be a correspondence with facts. Previously they had identified truth with true propositions, which in its turn were collapsed into facts, and hence on this view 'there was no difference between truth and the reality to which it was supposed to correspond.'[4] Later, in view of the problem with false propositions, they switched over to the official theory of correspondence, and the status of the truth bearer was transferred from propositions to beliefs. This theory again underwent a neo-classical transformation (in the hands of Kaplan and David).[5] In this version, propositions, or rather structured propositions, were brought back as the content of beliefs and assertions, and facts were envisaged as appropriately

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[3] The materials for this section are drawn mainly from Michael Glanzberg, 'Truth', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (henceforth *SEP*) (Winter 2016 edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/truth/ (accessed 3 May 2018).

[4] Ibid., quoted from G. E. Moore, 'Truth', *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*, ed. M. Baldwin (London: Macmillan, 1902), p. 21.

[5] David Kaplan, 'Demonstratives', in J. Almog, J. Perry and H. Wettstein (eds), *Themes from Kaplan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 481–563; Marian David, *Correspondence and Disquotation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

structured entities, so that truth could convincingly be recast as the correspondence between the two. Truth or correspondence obtains when the proposition and fact have the same structure, and the same constituents at each structural position, thereby mirroring each other.

1.2 *Truth as Coherence*

In this theory, truth ceases to be a relation of mirroring between beliefs or propositions on the one hand, and facts on the other. It now reshapes itself into an internal relation of coherence between propositions or beliefs—a relation that is much stronger than plain consistency. For Joachim,[6] one of the pioneers of this theory, truth is a relation that binds all beliefs or propositions into a single and complete whole, reflecting overall the ontology of monistic idealism. An individual belief or proposition in isolation is not true in the proper sense of the term according to Joachim. So far as a proposition is true if and only if it gets its content from, or is entailed by, a belief in a system, the question of correspondence does not play any role in the notion of truth.

1.3 *Truth as Pragmatics*

While in the coherence theory, a true proposition is bound in a holistic system by a single principle of unity, the pragmatic theorists look upon truth as another aspect of coherence. Truth becomes the end of enquiry, as pertaining to the last belief of the system that carries within itself the guarantee of not conflicting with the subsequent experience. It is interesting to note that while the overriding trend of the coherence theory is to discard correspondence altogether, the pragmatic theorists often seek to retain it as a 'nominal' or 'transcendent' definition of truth.

Thus, truth in all these frameworks imbibes a substantial ontological commitment: either it requires facts as structured

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[6] See section 2.1 of Glanzberg, 'Truth', *SEP*, which touches upon H. H. Joachim's theory with reference to his *The Nature of Truth* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906).

entities in the world that are over and above spatio-temporal events; or it invokes a grand system, binding all propositions or beliefs together. As for the pragmatic notion of truth, truth as marking the transparent and unique exit gate to experience and actions, it carries the burden of completing the whole network of beliefs to start off the external and non-propositional realm of experience and actions.

1.4 *Tarski's Theory of Truth*[7]

Tarski's theory figures as an important landmark in history of truth, in so far as it incorporates certain notions that were effectively availed of by both the substantivists and the deflationists. To avoid any polemics about the ontological status of beliefs or propositions, Tarski preferred to take sentences as truth bearers. His sentences, however, were fully interpreted sentences, having saturated meanings, where all semantic lacunae pertaining to contexts and indexicalities were appropriately plugged in. Tarski's conception of truth is a semantic conception, for it falls back on the notion of the meaning of sentences, which in its turn is spelt out in terms of the notions of *reference* and *satisfaction*. These two crucial notions are virtually the semantic functions of naming and predication.

It is notable that Tarski did not take truth to be a holistic system, nor as a finality of coherence that breaks into pragmatics. He takes truth as a form of correspondence, according to which it is not the whole sentences that come up in a mirroring relation to the facts, but boil down to a structural conformity. Further, as truth bearers are interpreted sentences, and as interpretation is always with respect to a particular language, truth also becomes language-specific for Tarski. And just as a general concept determines its specific instances, just as a general law entails its individual exemplifications, similarly a general theory of truth is also expected to entail all its applications with regard to a particular language L. This requirement is schematised in

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[7] Tarski, 'The Semantic Conception of Truth'.

what Tarski calls the 'Convention-T', according to which an adequate theory of truth for L must imply for each sentence φ of L:

'φ' is true if and only if φ.

Convention-T, alternatively called the Tarski biconditional, is supposed to guarantee that the truth predicate given by the theory will be extensionally correct, i.e., have for its extension all and only the true sentences of L. And to ensure this material adequacy for his truth theory, Tarski held that truth has to be defined recursively, where one can legitimately move from the truth of simple sentences to those of progressively complex structures. For example, let us suppose that L is a simple formal language with two simple sentences, viz., 'Snow is white' and 'Grass is green,' and has the sentential connectives 'v' and '~'. Then, equipped with the base clauses (*a*) 'Snow is white' iff snow is white; and (*b*) 'Grass is green' iff grass is green, one can move to the recursion clauses, viz.:

(a) For any sentence 'φ v ψ' of L is true iff 'φ' is true or 'ψ' is true
(b) '~ φ' is true iff it is not the case that 'φ' is true,

and finally derive all the true sentences of L.

We have noted that Tarski's notion of truth does not take a sentence as an undivided chunk, but gets into its internal composition of names and predicates, which he recasts into the respective notions of reference and satisfaction. Equipped with these tools, the theory of truth will progress somewhat in the following manner:

1. Base clauses:
     'snow' refers to snow
     'grass' refers to grass
     'a' satisfies 'is white' iff a is white
     'a' satisfies 'is green' iff a is green

2. For any atomic sentence 't is P': 't is P' is true iff the referent of 't' satisfies 'P'

Defining truth in terms of reference and satisfactions enables Tarski to break through Frege's unanalysable notion of truth that would have forbidden any exercise of splitting truth into reference and satisfaction, for according to Frege, *that* the referrer satisfies the predicate has to be *true* in the first place. Tarski's operation of reverting the simplicity and primacy of truth back to reference and satisfaction has its parallels in the respective philosophies of Russell and early Wittgenstein, where the purported simplicity of the Fregean sense or thought was broken into the simplicity of pre-semantic names and their corresponding objects. But Russell and early Wittgenstein did not seek to achieve a similar simplification of truth in terms of a language-specific meaning, which would have given way to a language-specific mechanism of reference and satisfaction. Taking truth as an abstract notion, both these philosophers were bogged down with either correspondence between propositions and facts, or with states of affairs actualising into facts.

Tarski's theory, despite its apparent attractiveness, has ample scope for philosophical discomforts, which can come at least from two quarters. Given that at least for some philosophical genres, truth demands a 'word-to-world' relation, does Tarski really achieve this relation (whether it is dubbed 'correspondence' or not) by way of reference and satisfaction? Secondly, Tarski does not give any explanatory or descriptive account of *how* reference and satisfaction is achieved—a crucial point registered by Field.[8] Field put in his own causal theory of reference, recommending it as not only having the tool of bypassing the ontology of facts, but also neutralising any ontological commitment to the nature of particulars or properties. Now all that we can suggest at this

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[8] Hartry Field, 'Tarski's Theory of Truth', *Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 69 (1972), pp. 347–75. See Glanzberg, 'Truth', *SEP*, for his discussion and citation of Field.

juncture is that neither Tarski's nor Field's theory of truth or reference is as unproblematic as it is claimed to be. Field's theory is a theory of causation–cum-representation, which is virtually the claim of meaning or reference being *caused* by the things— shirking from the requirement of any correspondence between proposition and facts, or even from the Tarskian demand of reference and satisfaction. Whether it marks any advancement in our understanding of key notions of reference and truth is still questionable.

1.5 *Truth: Realism versus Anti-realism*

On the substantivist theories, truth does not only imbibe the ontology of facts, tropes, moments, or an enigmatic relation between the word and the world; it does not only commit itself to a unique and complete system of beliefs, or a final threshold where beliefs directly touch experiences and activities. There is another way whereby truth relates to metaphysics, i.e., in the area of the debate between realism and anti-realism and their related concerns. It may be noted at the very outset that the correspondence theory of truth, even when thinned out in terms of reference and satisfaction, imbibes a minimal commitment to an objective reality that is independent of the way we think or describe it. An *objective* reference in the world, pinned down by the referrer, and satisfying or not satisfying a predicate *determinately*, determines what we say about this world, *truly* or *falsely*, excluding any other option. Thus a theory of truth that deploys bivalence and thereby feeds on an objective and determinate relation of reference and predication is geared to a realistic metaphysics.

Truth for many anti-realists amounts to verification, i.e., to say that a proposition is true is virtually to describe the conditions of its verification. In this scenario, truth is not based on an objective reference and a determinate satisfaction, but is constrained by our abilities to verify, and thus overall by the epistemic situation. Dummett explains that this verificationist

notion of truth breaks through the constraints of bivalence,[9] for many statements that are unverifiable in principle cannot be said to be true or false. Examples of such statements would be such claims as there is some substance, say uranium, present in some region of the universe, too distant to be inspected by us within the normal span of our lifetime.

It is interesting to note that both realism and anti-realism can make use of Tarski's T-schema. Tarski's base clauses are merely disquotational; they by themselves are not based on any objectivity of reference and satisfaction capturing the relation between the word and the world. They can be read either in a realist overtone, or merely as reflecting the procedures of verification, which is purportedly enough to capture the notion of reference.

Wright and Lynch seem to digress into a more flexible notion of truth—beyond the traditional trichotomy of correspondence, coherence and pragmatism. Their notion of truth accommodates multiple ways in which the truth bearer can be true. Wright says that in certain domains of discourse, truth is a correspondence-like relation, while in other cases it is assertability. Lynch takes truth to be a multiple-role concept that is multiply realisable; sometimes it is realised by the correspondence property, sometimes by the assertability property.[10] Pending the full account of Wittgenstein's notion of truth in the forthcoming sections, at present we can at least say that this view of Wright and Lynch can be synchronised with Wittgenstein's *family resemblance* account of truth-games, provided that the difference

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[9] See Glanzberg, 'Truth', section 4.2, citing Michael Dummett, 'Truth', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, vol. 59 (1959), pp. 141–62; and Dummett, 'What Is a Theory of Meaning? (II)', in G. Evans and J. McDowell (eds), *Truth and Meaning* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976).

[10] See Glanzberg, 'Truth', section 4.4, for a brief entry on the views of Wright and Lynch, citing Michael P. Lynch (ed.), *The Nature of Truth: Classical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), and Lynch, *Truth as One and Many* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2009).

between correspondence and assertability demanded by these two philosophers is not itself based on objective entities, but flesh out in uses and practices.

2. The Deflationary Theory of Truth

Now that we know the ontological commitment embedded in most truth theories, as well as certain attempts to deontologise truth in a verificationist reduction, we can delve into the deflationary theory to see how it stands against the realist/anti-realist dichotomy.[11]

Deflationism comes in three or four major versions, all of them sharing the common claim that truth carries no metaphysical significance of its own; it is not a property like red, fat or wooden that can make any substantial addition to the truth bearer, not even the property of a 'verificational procedure', not to speak of 'corresponding to' or 'mirroring' facts, or a 'reference/satisfaction' relation, or being a 'unique and complete system', etc.

The chief motivation behind the deflationist agenda seems to be this: the substantivist has to commit herself not only to the problematic ontology of de-spatialised and de-temporalised facts as distinct from events, but also to a proliferation of the variety of facts pertaining to different disciplines, viz., history, sociology, empirical sciences like chemistry or biology, and overall the purist field of mathematics. What figures as the truth maker of 'New Delhi is the capital of India' are certain facts about history and civics; what makes the truth of 'Water boils at 100° centigrade' are material facts about the liquid water and its molecular structure; whereas the required status of the truth maker of mathematical statements will have to pertain to

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[11] Apart from Glanzberg, 'Truth', *SEP*, I have also used Pascal Engels, *Truth* (London: Routledge, 2014), chapter 2; and also Dorit Bar-On and Keith Simmons, 'Deflationism', in Lepore Earnest and Smith Barry (eds), *Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Language* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), for writing this section.

a special realm of mathematics. For a deflationist, such an array of facts or the reasons for accepting propositions may be present as real items of the world, but they never enter into philosophy, still less as the content of truth predicates. Truth always stays clear of this load, delightfully light and general, purged of all the burden of prodigal specificities.

The major versions of deflationism are disquotationalism (Field), minimalism (Horwich), redundancy theory (Ramsey), pro-sentential theory (Brandom) and illocutionary deflationism (Ayer and arguably Austin).[12] The versions differ internally from each other with respect to the issues about what it is—the sentence or the proposition—that is the truth bearer; whether truth serves an unsubstantial though logically essential function, or whether it is completely eliminable.

2.1 *Disquotationalism (DQ Theory)*

There is no more to the truth of, say, the sentence 'Snow is white' than is given by the disquotation of its quote-name. To say that a sentence is true is just an indirect way of saying the sentence itself. All T-sentences of the form '"Snow is white" is true iff snow is white' together constitute a complete and exhaustive definition of 'true'. The question naturally arises as to why we cannot totally dispense with the truth predicate and talk directly about the world. The answer is that is that this truth predicate as a device for disquotation can make useful claims which we

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12 The major works representing each of these versions include: Hartry Field, 'Deflationist Views of Meaning and Content', *Mind*, vol. 103 (1994), pp. 249–85; Paul Horwich, *Truth* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990); Frank P. Ramsey, 'Facts and Propositions', *Aristotelian Society Supplement*, vol. 7 (1927), pp. 153–70; R. Brandom, *Making It Explicit* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994); A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic* (London: Gollancz, 1946); J. L. Austin, *Philosophical Papers*, ed. J. O. Urmson and G. J. Warnock (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961). Brandom's and Ayer's works are cited in Bar-On and Simmons, 'Deflationism'; other works are cited in Glanzberg, 'Truth'.

cannot formulate otherwise—like (A) blind ascription and (B) quantifying over an unwieldy conjunction or disjunction (that may be finite or potentially infinite). Examples of these cases include: (A) The next thing that Bill will say will be true; and (B) Every sentence of the form P or not-P is true. In (A), the target utterance is not picked out by a quote-name, because the truth ascription being blind, the sentence itself may not be available to the hearer for quotation or truth ascription. In the case of (B), since we cannot produce an infinite or indefinite conjunction of sentences, we attempt to achieve the desired effect by generalising and bringing them under the truth predicate.

The formal efficacy of the truth predicate becomes further obvious once we try to express (B) in the format of first-order quantificational logic without the predicate of truth. We may try to do this by dropping the truth predicate both with the generalised form of (B) and also with respect to each of its substitution instances. Suppose our notations of symbolisation are: 'x' as an individual variable ranging over sentences, 'Sx' as 'x is of the form p or not-p', and a, b, c, d, etc., as each of the individual constants substitutable for x. The symbolised form of the individual substitution instances of (B) would be $Sa \supset a$, $Sb \supset b$ and so on, and the symbolised form of the general proposition (B) would be $(x) (Sx \supset x)$. What emerges is that an effort to demonstrate the acclaimed redundancy of the truth predicate by dropping this predicate from the consequent of (B) (in both its general as well as individualised versions) fails: it results in a blatantly ill-formed formula that puts a logical relation of entailment (a propositional connective) between a proposition (antecedent) and a mere name (either in the shape of an individual variable or a constant) stripped of any predicate whatever. This shows that a truth predicate cannot be demonstrated to be redundant in the fullest sense of the term. One cannot deduce the denominalised sentence from the disquotational schema, i.e., one cannot deduce the mere being of the sentence from a statement *that* the said sentence is true, for the simple reason that the mere being of a sentence or a

truth bearer, in so far as it is only named and not predicated (at least as bearing a name), is not available for any kind of logical deduction. Hence, one has to recast the disquotational schema as a strong equivalence (i.e., an equivalence of sense between '"s" is true and s', i.e., as an identity of sense between '"x" is true and x'. It is only by ensuring this equality of sense that one can override the notational disparity between 'φx' and 'x', establish an identity between 'Tx (x is true)' and 'x', and then substitute 'Tx' in place of 'x' in the consequent of (B), or 'Ta', 'Tb', 'Tc', etc., in place of 'a', 'b', 'c', respectively. Statements with an existential quantifier (e.g., 'At least one of the sentences uttered by Einstein is true') or universal sentences with complete enumeration ('Everything that Kaṇāda said is true') are also amenable to the same mode of analysis. In fine, the truth predicate is not fully redundant: the strong identity of sense between '"x" is true' and 'x' claimed in the disquotational schema can enable one to express a conjunction or a disjunction—finite or infinite—as a general proposition in the framework of first-order quantificational logic, thus enhancing the expressive power of quantificational logic.

In spite of its logical efficacy or expressive power, it needs to be remembered that each truth predicate boils down to the sentence itself—there is nothing common shared by all truth predicates other than what is shared by the different sentences to which the predicate is attached. The truth predicate used as this kind of convenient device is obviously a stipulation. Some philosophers hold that Tarski biconditionals, whether in their original atomic versions or in their non-atomic recursions, are stipulations as well.

2.2 *Minimalism*

This version endorsed by Horwich[13] takes propositions, rather than sentences, as the primary truth bearers. The claim comes in the form of the following equivalence schema: 'The proposition

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[13] See footnote 12.

that p is true iff p,' which obviously has an infinite number of substitution instances. All these substitution instances taken together constitute the complete theory of truth. Like the disquotationalist, Horwich also claims that the truth predicate only serves as the logical device for generalising and upholding an unwieldy mass of instances with truth locutions. Even the instances where the truth predicate seems to possess a substantive character—'True beliefs engender successful actions'—can be reverted to nothing but the equivalence schema quoted above. Take for instance the proposition, 'If the belief *that the liquid in the glass on the front table quenches thirst* is true then it leads to the successful action of quenching thirst.' This proposition does not actually substantiate the truth predicate attached to the belief in terms of successful action, but only nominalises the success claim of the belief in terms of the truth predicate. In other words, the above proposition is to be rewritten as: 'If the liquid in the glass is water then it leads to successful quenching of thirst.' This proposition can now be quoted and disquoted in terms of the truth predicate without adding or detracting any content. One can of course make substantial investigations and discoveries about the connections between beliefs, desires, actions and their success, but these properties do not touch the notion of truth.

2.3 *The Redundancy Theory*

A typified version of deflationism claims the following equivalence relations:

(a) 'φ is true' has the same meaning as 'φ'
(b) To assert that 'φ is true' is the same as asserting that φ

While according to the DQ and minimalist versions, 'true' is a genuine predicate and has a distinctive use (if not of a substantive addition, at least as a logical device), the redundancy theory held by Ramsey views 'true' as entirely dispensable.[14] Even

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[14] See footnote 12.

where truth seems to be ineliminable, as in cases like 'Whatever the Pope says is true,' Ramsey maintains that it can be done. For Ramsey the question about truth conditions and truth makers boils down to the question about what is involved in making a true judgement, but while our behaviours inform the connection between belief and judgement, these notions do not get into the concept of truth. While for the redundancy theorists the meaning equation or assertion equation between 'φ is true' and 'φ' (quoted above) is necessary, 'minimalism' comes to substitute a broader range of relations between the two sides of the biconditional truth schema. Horwich would hold that the T-equations are not really redundant or repetitive; apart from serving as a logical device of nominalisation and generalisation, they also carry the weight of the conventional decision to use the 'truth' locution in the purported way. In this respect, minimalism directly relies on Tarski's scheme, where the biconditionals are not necessary but material biconditionals. The key idea of the minimalist theories can be stated as follows: 'For a given language L and every φ in L, the biconditionals '"φ" is true iff φ' hold by definition (or analytically, or trivially, or by stipulation).'

2.4 *The Pro-sentential Theory*

Brandom's pro-sentential theory of truth roughly comes to this: 'is true' is not a predicate but an operator that can combine with other expressions to form a pro-sentence, viz., 'That is true.'[15] The semantics of a pro-sentence is like that of an anaphoric expression. It should be noted that pro-sentences like 'This is true' or 'That is true' can be lazy or non-lazy, i.e., they can simply inherit the content of their antecedents, or incur an added element into themselves. For example, the pro-sentence 'That is true' uttered in response to 'Snow is white' is obviously a lazy anaphor. To consider a contrastive example, 'Everything he said is true': this according to the pro-sententialist should be understood as having the logical form of 'Everything he said

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[15] See footnote 12.

is such that if he said that it is true then it is true.' Here the phrase 'it is true' on both its occurrences are pro-sentences that are bound variables and not a lazy anaphor. The first occurrence of 'it is true' is not a simple repetition of 'everything he said', the second occurrence is also not a simple repetition of 'everything he said and said to be true'. It should be noted that though this anaphoric theory of truth resembles the DQ claim of the truth predicate being a generalisation or collection of conjunctions and disjunctions, these two theories would differ on the point that while for the latter the truth bearer is the sentence, the former takes it to be a proposition.

It needs to be repeated that under all these options (i.e., whether the biconditional is analytic, trivial, definitional, stipulational or pro-sentential), the truth schema is supposed to ensure that the truth predicate does not add any substantial content to the truth bearer. There is no scope for building any metaphysics, not even a tension between an expensive and a parsimonious one.

3. Standard Objections to the Deflationist Theory of Truth

The exact nature of the tension between the substantive and the deflationary theories of truth chiefly pertains to whether/how the meaning of the truth bearers should be related to their truth conditions. As we have noted, for the correspondence theory, the truth bearers are propositions or beliefs (Russell and Moore), or interpreted sentences (Tarski). All of these are based on the idea that the truth bearers are meaningful, for it is by virtue of their meaning that they are able to say something about the world—truly or falsely. The coherence theorists also demand that the truth bearers form a complete system of beliefs, and it is only *qua* their meaningful status that they can enter into a relation of coherence. This is the case for the anti-realist theories as well, for a belief is verifiable only in so far as it is meaningful. Thus, for many coherence theorists as well as anti-

realists, the acclaimed truth bearers are knit into a circle; it is only by virtue of their meaning that they become bearers of truth. Moreover, in many cases the meaning of the truth bearers is identical with, or at least related to, their truth conditions— i.e., their meaning explains how they get their objective truth-value. And the propositions get their meaning by virtue of the constituents in the world and their being brought together in the right way—which explains how the truth conditions lead to their truth-value. Tarski's theory of truth can be construed in this way as well. The unquoted occurrence of φ is an occurrence of an interpreted sentence which has a truth-value, and also provides the truth conditions. The base clauses of the recursive definition of truth also state the semantic properties of the constituents of the interpreted sentence in terms of reference and satisfaction, which in their turn determine the truth-value of the entire sentence and its progressively compounded structures. For the realist, these semantic properties pertain to the stuff bearing a property, e.g., the stuff snow bearing the property of whiteness; while for the anti-realist these semantic properties are the conditions under which the belief that the stuff snow bears the property of whiteness can be justified. Overall, a standard theory of truth turns out to be a theory of truth conditions.

There are some obvious problems that would stand in the way of the deflationist on the issue of meaning and its relation with truth conditions. These problems turn out to be more palpable for the DQ theorist, for whom the truth bearer is a sentence (and not a proposition), so that the sole purpose of the truth predicate is simply to hold up the physical chunk of the sentence, clasp it tightly and fully, simply to ensure that no material content of the truth bearer is lost. And this would mean that the string of phonemes or written marks is already identified under a minimal syntactic structure. Further, there might be homophonic sentences that may turn out to have truth-values—precisely opposed to that of the original sentence on the left hand side—simply by disquotation. Obvious examples of such cases would be: 'Empedocles lies (reclines) on the bed'

is true iff Empedocles lies (says a false statement) on the bed—where the sentence on the left-hand side may be true, but the same-sounding sentence on the right-hand side may be false. More complex variations of such homophonic sentences across different languages, with different meanings and opposite truth-values, may easily be imagined. Thus, if the theory of disquotational deflationism of truth is to work, truth has to be inflated ironically into a full-fledged semantic and syntactic identity.

In fact, this is obvious in the very enunciation of the disquotational theory: 'To say that grass is green is true is to say that grass is green.' The notion of *saying that* already imbibes the notion of a statement as opposed to that of a sentence, or to the notions of wishing that, questioning that, etc. Hence, as the very proposition of deflating the notion of truth in terms of disquoting it already involves a prior inflation, the deflationary programme cannot even get off the ground.

The other editions of deflationism—which take truth bearers to be propositions, and thereby acknowledge their 'meaningful' status—face a different predicament. They cannot give meanings a truth-conditional character, for unless they delink the meaning of the truth bearer on the left-hand side from their truth conditions, they cannot disquote the truth bearer on the right-hand side—posing the truth adding nothing to the truth bearer. For in that case, contrary to the deflationist proposal, truth would already have been inflated to meaning, and the disquoted sentence would have made a genuine addition. The T-schema would have to be interpreted like this: The proposition P on the left-hand side would have embodied a set of possible truth conditions, and the right-hand side says that one of the conditions has obtained. Such a reading would not be able to retain the deflationary agenda for truth.

There are certain other objections that are patently levelled against all the versions of this theory. Firstly, equality between '"s" is true' and 's' is likely to fail when there is an additional investment of modality. When the necessity operator is prefixed

to 's', it may express s's status of being a paradigm of describing or adjudging the truth or falsity of other propositions, 's' itself being beyond the framework of truth-value ascriptions. But when the necessity operator is prefixed to '"s" is true', it may express the necessary status of s's having the truth-value of true as contrasted with that of its (contingent) falsity. Bave illustrates that the two statements, 'It is necessary that 1 + 1 = 2' and 'It is necessary that "1 + 1 = 2" is true', are not equivalent. Secondly, the DQ equation also fails in the propositional attitude contexts, where the subject's belief or other propositional attitudes put up a screen between the two halves of the DQ schema—i.e., between the truth predicate on the one hand and the disquoted truth bearer on the other. One may justifiably believe that snow is white, but she may not justifiably believe that 'Snow is white' is true—i.e., the justifiability may pertain to the belief, but not to the truth predicate of the belief. Thirdly, there will be some predictable troubles with regard to indexicals and demonstratives, where clearly the DQ schema will not hold either for truth or reference. The obvious problem in recasting the sentence: '"I teach in the Philosophy Dept. of Delhi University" is true' as '"I teach in the Philosophy Dept. of Delhi University" is true iff I teach in the Philosophy Dept. of Delhi University' is that while the first occurrence of 'I' refers to the interpretee, the second occurrence refers to the interpreter. A brief exposure to all these patent predicaments of the deflationary theory will prepare the required backdrop for understanding how Wittgenstein's departure from this programme went to a different level—with a radically different temperament.

4. Dummett's Objections to the Deflationary Theory of Truth[16]

Dummett held that understanding a sentence is the speaker's ability to say whether the sentence is true under circumstances

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[16] I rely heavily on Putnam's account in *The Threefold Cord* for the issues discussed in the next sections (see Lecture III, pp. 43–70).

that the speaker can actually bring about. Putnam reports
Dummett as posing a challenge on the deflationists, so that they
are obliged to accept two positions neither of which fits well
in their scheme. First, as Dummett points out, the deflationist
strategy of collapsing 'p' and 'p is true' by a relation of equivalence
ducks the vital question about what understanding p *itself*
consists in, especially when p is a sentence with an unknown
truth-value of the past (e.g., 'Lizzie Borden killed her parents
with an axe'[17]) or is an undecided conjecture in mathematics
(twin primes[18]). This is obviously the same point that we have
already rehearsed in the previous section, viz., to clasp or
unclasp a sentence by adding or withdrawing a truth predicate
already presupposes its semantic and syntactic identity. Putnam
says that Dummett would also concede the Tarskian claim that
one who understands that p is true also knows that p is true is
equivalent to p. But for Dummett, understanding a sentence of
the form 'p is true' consists in the speaker's ability to recognise
the data by which p is verified. Secondly, since both p and not-p
may lack this property of truth (as infamously happened in the
Lizzie Borden case, or with the mathematical theorem of twin
primes), we have to give up on the classical law of bivalence.
Now, Putnam clarifies that according to Dummett, if truth is
delinked from the speaker's knowledge of its verification, then
the notion itself becomes vacuous or a 'useless metaphysical
abstraction'; or if truth is retained as the property that involves
the speaker's knowledge of verification, then in some cases we
have to give up the law of bivalence.

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[17] A middle-aged married couple, Andrew Borden and his second wife
Abby Borden, were brutally murdered with an axe at their home on
the morning of Thursday, 4 August 1892. The prime suspect was Lizzie
Borden, Mr Borden's daughter (by his ex-wife), but as the evidences
against her (or anyone else) were inconclusive, the jury acquitted Lizzie
after the trial. No one else was charged in the murders, and they continue
to be a subject of research and speculation. See https://en.wikipedia.org/
wiki/Lizzie_Borden (accessed 5 May 2018).

[18] The conjecture that there are infinitely many twin primes (primes that
are obtained by adding or subtracting two to a prime).

The deflationists (like Horwich) would argue that the understanding of sentences like 'p is true' does involve the speaker's knowledge of the conditions of verification—not conclusive verification, but verification to an acceptable degree. And as for the law of excluded middle, many deflationists say that truth is often a device to uphold the disjunctive form of 'p or not-p', for instance in the sentence: '"Lizzie Borden killed her parents with an axe or she did not" is true.' Putnam argues that acceptance of such a convention on the part of the deflationists itself betrays a substantive commitment—of a fact either obtaining or not obtaining—to make the convention meaningful. Besides, once the deflationists are cornered into accepting something like a degree of assertability as a function of observable circumstances as amounting to the content of truth, they would be at a loss to make any sense of statements that are neither confirmed nor disconfirmed by observable circumstances.

5. Wittgenstein's View of Truth: Beyond the Substantivist/Deflationist Dichotomy

The apparent affinity between Wittgenstein and the deflationist is misleading, and that is why it is important to see how he carried out a separate pattern of sidetracking, or better, dissolving, the celebrated dichotomy between the substantivist and the deflationary theories. Choosing Frege as an exemplary figure of substantivism will help us articulate the kernel of Wittgenstein's resistance against this dichotomy. Both Frege's substantivism and deflationism take truth to be a meta-level discourse, while for Wittgenstein truth does not describe, capture, uphold or nominalise anything—thought or fact in the third realm, relation of correspondence, reference and satisfaction, unique and complete system of beliefs, cluster of speech acts or illocutionary forces, conditions of verification— that can be put in a neat equational T-schema. If certain versions of deflationism take truth to be a correspondence with a kind

of speech situation fashioned by convention, Wittgenstein's approach to truth would be subtly and crucially different from these theories as well. Truth for Wittgenstein is a cluster of language-games related by family resemblances; it does not *name* this cluster of uses or illocutionary forces, but itself boils down to an incomplete spread of games, unavailable to any compact formalisation.

5.1 *Truth as a Flow of Family Resemblances*

For Wittgenstein, truth does not range over a homogeneous essence of thought, as contrasted with non-thoughts, like ideas, material objects, activities (*PI* 23). This becomes clear when Wittgenstein explains that language-games like description or reporting or presenting the results of an experiment in tables and diagrams do not share a common essence of statement or apprehension of thought. There can be so many different kinds of games that are all conveniently characterised as 'description'—description of a body's position by means of its coordinates, description of a facial expression, description of a mood, description of a sensation of touch, etc. Putting the body in its spatial coordinates involves quantifying it or encasing it in a boundary, and forcibly segregating it from its interactions from other bodies around; description of a facial expression would invite a conscious resistance to all quantitative representations of the face, say, muscular movements from certain positions to others or as having measurable lengths and breadths, or a numerico-spatial throbbing of tissues. Rather (in the last case), it involves an intense expansion of each movement—say of the facial muscle, of the nose, the lips, or of the eyeballs—against a larger backdrop. The description of a mood—in so far as it goes beyond the present situation to let in dispositions, attitudes and counterfactuals—has an interesting spirit of resistance to description itself. Further, description of a sensation—be it of touch, vision or taste—involves a mode of 'privatising' it, i.e., deliberately restricting its account to a few and limited number

of cases, peculiar to the perceiver, withdrawing its circulation from the common coordinates that are available to all perceivers. Reporting an event involves special emphasis on the time, place, number of characters involved in the event—consciously confining the narrative to the time span and not delving into the remote causes, associative backdrop or detailed account of the characters.

All this shows that *the word 'description', designed to arch over all these cases, is a misnomer, a misleading contrivance to lift up a common essence of this plethora of uses in the shape of an ethereal membrane—the membrane of description, thought or truth*. Turning a question into its verbal form, like 'It is doubtful that …' or 'It is questionable that …' does not turn the question into a statement. Each tool or lever is integrated in a mechanism in a uniquely different way, so that any attempt to gloss over these distinctions under a general description like 'All tools serve to modify something or the other' falls flat; it does not extract a common essence running across all the tools (see chapter II, section 1.7). Similarly, turning all the above language-games into the verbal form 'It is the case that …' does not serve to extract the common essence of a thought—an asserted content that can be true or false—as essentially different from other games like questions, commands, speculations, etc. Similar remarks apply to each of these purported types of language-games supposedly invested with respective essences.

In *PI* (pp. 222–23), Wittgenstein specifically emphasises that truth does not consist in a passive correspondence; there are explicitly different criteria to decide what a *true confession*, a *true report of the dream* consists in. The truth of the report or the confession is not determined by considerations of whether it is in accordance with a particular process or event that happened. Rather, the truth consists in whether certain relevant consequences can be drawn about the narrator from the account he gives. There are certain protocols about what incidents show the important and suggestive aspects of the speaker, and what constitutes the *truthfulness*—and not *truth*—of the report. This

nuanced difference between truth and truthfulness, or rather the 'truthful' dimension of truth, shows once again that truth is not a passive replication of reality, or that it is a speech act that does not describe, but enacts the particular needs and interest, erupts with a peculiarly explosive force on this occasion. For here truth is enacted as truthfulness, the specific needs, interests and protocols woven around truth are played out primarily by the hearer apparently at the receiving end, and not the speaker. The language-game of confessing one's motives and that of guessing a third person's motives are different, which again shows that truth is not a passive shadow trailing behind reality. We 'remain unconscious of the prodigious variety of all the everyday language-games' with truth, certainty, knowledge, because the clothing of these general words 'truth', 'certainty', 'knowledge', etc., makes all cases of truth-games look alike. At *PI* 97, Wittgenstein states quite explicitly that the concepts of language, proposition, word, proof, truth, experience are not super-concepts with a super-order existing among them. These words have a use, as humble as that of words like 'table', 'lamp' and 'door'.

At *PI* pp. 224–25, Wittgenstein explains how the enactive character of truth gets reflected in the enactive character of knowledge and certainty. The difference between the certainties of the following statements—'He is much depressed,' '25 × 25 = 625,' and 'I am 60 years old'—is a difference between three kinds of language-games. Mathematical statements, being paradigms of empirical verification of truths, are themselves not available for empirical verification, and this shows that with respect to mathematics, truth is played out in a different manner than with a third-person ascription of feelings and mood, or a report on one's age.

Further, *PI* 246 and 303 are suggestive of the insight that truth is often the exercise of recasting the notion of facthood or correspondence in a reverse direction—to the denial of facticity or correspondence. This is what we find with the status of statements like 'I can only believe that someone else is in pain,

but I know it if I am.' Wittgenstein explains that these statements are not about a rational relation between first-person or third-person knowledge and what statements they would sanction. He observes that 'in truth' these seeming statements are the philosophical exercise of exchanging one expression for another, or the philosophical decision to use belief and knowledge respectively for third-person and first-person ascription of pain. So truth can be played as the further language-game of revising the status of a language-game—reverting from its seeming statement-like status to being a grammatical paradigm of describing a first-person and third-person approach to pain.

5.2 *Wittgenstein vis-à-vis Frege on Truth*

For Frege, truth and thought are realities of a higher level, what he calls the third realm—they are meta-level representations of reality in the first realm.[19] For Frege, the ultimate unit of meaning and communication is truth or thought; language-games or speech activities cannot take its place, for the simple reason that a game or activity represents something only by virtue of being laid out in thought. A language-game or a so-called speech act is an item of the first realm, and thus falls back on thought by virtue of which it is represented as a speech act.

But for Wittgenstein, truth is itself a language-game. For him, a language-game is the unit of communication; there is no question of the language-game or speech activity falling back on thought or truth, supposedly invested with the higher authority of disambiguating and sanctifying all realities of the first or second realm—be it pictures, feelings, ideas, images, activities, etc.

For Wittgenstein, Frege's idea that every assertion contains an assumption, which is the thing that is asserted, is wrong (*PI* 22). Such an idea really rests on the merely trivial possibility found in our language of writing every statement in the form

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[19] Frege's view on truth has been drawn from his article 'The Thought: A Logical Inquiry'.

'It is asserted that such and such is the case.' Here Wittgenstein points out that either the nested component—'that such and such is the case' is not a move in language, or if it is a move then it itself becomes an assertion, so that the assertion sign becomes superfluous. It is the Fregean myth of thought that can be apprehended independent of its assertion in an indicative sentence as true or false that Wittgenstein questions and refutes. As he goes on to argue, the direction of Frege's argument has unpalatable consequences in the reverse direction: the fact that one can, as a matter of convention, rewrite every assertive sentence like 'It is raining' as 'Is it raining? Yes' would imply that every statement contains a question. While for Frege, all sentences being in the external, material world of the first realm are categorically incompatible with truth (or falsity) that belong only to the third realm, yet indicative sentences and sentence-questions can *express* thoughts, which no other kind of sentence can. All other sentences, apart from indicatives and sentence-questions (for instance a word-question like 'What is the national capital of India?' or a wish or a benediction, etc.) are merely activities that fall back upon a thought for being represented *qua* their status of certain kinds of activities that are supposed to express relevant questions, wishes, etc. Unlike an indicative sentence, the word-question does not simply fall back upon the thought that 'Delhi is the national capital of India' expresses the situation 'that Delhi was selected and continues to be the national capital of India'; and for this reason the above word-question is incapable of expressing a thought. For Frege, what makes thought logically and ontologically prior to everything is the representability or describability of everything in its terms, and for this reason a sentence-question embeds the full-fledged thought in the shape of its answer. For Wittgenstein, the unit of communication is the language-game or activity nested in forms of living; there is no Fregean requirement of describing or representing that activity or language-game as always lifting it up in the second level. This Fregean maxim that demanded every bit of language or communication to be lifted up to the

meta level of thought is reflected in his anxiety, viz., to make truth the predicate of a sentence lands us in an infinite regress until and unless we stop the regress in thought—which for Frege is prior to sentences or usage of sentence.[20] Philosophy of language needed a breakthrough from the Fregean shackles to release communication activities from meta-level representation, enabling them to function by themselves.

In a footnote on p. 11 of *PI*, Wittgenstein explains and exposes the gratuitous nature of thought in terms of the notion of a 'proposition radical'. The picture of a boxer with a particular stance can be read in many ways—as how he should stand, should hold himself, should not hold himself, or what he actually did in a certain situation or again what he actually did *not* do in that situation. But none of these readings are add-ons to the original picture, for without any of these reading the purportedly original picture comes to nothing. Similarly, assertion too is not an add-on to a putatively prior thought content. The clause nested in a sentence like 'It is asserted that …' is not a full-fledged assumption that is added on with an assertion; it is an assumption only in the sense of a 'proposition radical' phrased in the language of chemistry.[21] It is a mistake to think that assertion consists of two actions—entertaining an assertable thought and the actual asserting—assigning the truth-value or something of the kind. Entertaining something without asserting it is not a language-game to which assertion can be added, in the way one can add to the performance of singing to a musical score, or read out the same propositional sign either soft or loud. For Wittgenstein, entertaining something without assigning truth-value, or deliberately withdrawing truth-value from it, can be separate language-game—a different thought comparable with the more standard practices of truth-value

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[20] Ibid., p. 19.

[21] As noted in chapter I, section 1.6, for Wittgenstein, failure or success in understanding a proposition is internal to the sign system that constitutes the proposition. Similarly, adding or withdrawing the truth predicate is also internal to the truth bearer.

ascription. But this is not to imply that entertaining a thought and adding truth to it are two different stages of the same process.

At *PI* 137, Wittgenstein goes on to argue that the way the notions of truth and propositions are embedded in each other cannot be captured by the notion of 'fitting', i.e., these two notions as fitting each other. This is probably because the notion of fitting is primarily a spatial notion involving either a spatial coincidence or the matching of two jigsaw puzzle pieces, or a cog-wheel determining the range of suitable materials that it can spatially accommodate in its structure in order to enmesh them. But when it comes to truth and propositions, one cannot separate out any one of them and speculate which other notion can physically match up with this notion. Putnam aptly described this behaviour of truth in his observation that truth is not a free-standing property.[22] When we define chess pieces, we do not deploy the notion of 'fitting'—we cannot take each piece in isolation and go on to fit a specific kind of movement with each piece. It is not the physical shape of the piece that determines its trajectory, or whether it can check or be checked by other pieces or not. It is the entire framework of the rules of the game, the rules governing the movement of each piece in relation to the other, that makes the rule about checking the king a constituent part of the game. Similarly, it is within the syntactic rules of sentence formation and the formal introduction of the assertion sign that the defining notion of truth forms a constituent part of, and not a fixture to be attached to, the notion of a proposition. Wittgenstein further clarifies that if one insists on the expression of 'fitting' as capturing the relation between proposition and truth, one should think it in terms of a subsequent letter of the alphabet (say 'L' in English) fitting the previous one, i.e., 'K'—a fitting that forms a constituent part of the entire collection and pattern of the alphabet, not confined to the physical layout of the letter taken in isolation. Putnam observed that for Wittgenstein

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[22] Putnam, *The Threefold Cord*, p. 67.

'"p" is true = p' is a grammatical or a tautologous proposition. I think that this should be taken to mean that it is in the entire framework of semantic and syntactic identity—already defining a proposition—that one can apply the criterion of truth being the identifying mark of a proposition; that is, one can ask: 'Can "is true" be added to its end?' or 'Can the phrase "This is how it is" be prefixed to the proposition?'

Again, Wittgenstein's reactions against the notion of fitting, as capturing the notion of truth, seems to put him on par with Frege, who said that correspondence cannot ever capture the notion of truth, for correspondence is markedly a notion of spatial coincidence. But Frege did not take the further step of displacing this notion of spatial coincidence in terms of a broader framework of language-games. He invoked a non-spatial and non-temporal realm of truth as constituting thought.

At *PI* 540–44, Wittgenstein considers an interesting situation where a person, seeing a sky clearing after a long and insufferable spell of rain, blurts out some unfamiliar string of sounds, which he later explains as meaning the same as what is meant by saying: 'The sky will be clearing soon.' Wittgenstein considers the question whether the sheer feeling of these unintelligible words can supply them with the meaning that the standard English sentence has. He says that one cannot identify the emotions felt by a smiling face looking down by simply looking at this face (or its picture) in isolation. It is the wider purview, including what the face is looking at—the antics of a child, or a child getting brutally tortured—that gives meaning and content to the feelings portrayed in this face. Similarly the feelings of the apparently inarticulate words can give it *truth* only in the wider context in which the familiar language—say English—with its rules of syntax and meaning is in place, making it possible for the speaker to draw some lines of correlation from the words of the English sentence to appropriate word-like bits of that apparently unintelligible string. Feelings and cognitions, emotions and propositions do not belong to mutually exclusive categories; both have to be enactively expanded against a wide

backdrop to achieve their respective success—whether in the terminology of genuineness or authenticity, or in that of truth or veracity.

It is interesting to note that Frege—despite his pronounced substantivist claim of truth—does seem to retain a strain of deflationism in his truth theory. He says that if the main spirit of *intending to represent* is missing with respect to a sentence, then adding the predicate *truth* will not make it true—a failure that is typically exemplified in the case of playacting.[23] For Frege, playacting is an activity, and by virtue of being an activity it belongs to the first realm and falls back on thought for itself being represented as playacting. To put the matter more explicitly, if one is playacting, then since truth does not belong to this opaque piece of activity, it has to be recast in the shape of a thought or a proposition—viz., I am uttering these sentences in the context of playacting, and it is only this second-order sentence, and not the sentences uttered as playacting, that can express thought or be true. No matter how many times the actor blares out the added suffix of 'is true' to his sentential dialogues, this addition is inconsequential. On the other hand, if the addition of the predicate 'is true' really holds, that would imply that the actor has already come out of his playacting mode and is apprehending genuine thought, to which he can meaningfully apply the predicate of truth. This does not make Frege a deflationist, for according to Frege truths are constitutive of facts; true thoughts *are* facts.[24] For Frege, truth does not inflate thought, but this is simply because he has already inflated truth to the status of an undefinable and constitutive predicate of thought in the third realm. However, this again occasions a renewed appreciation of the distance between Frege and Wittgenstein. For Frege, truth is a passive replica, though not trailing behind but foreshadowing all items of reality. All material objects, ideas, impressions, actions, depend on truth for its representation; true thoughts have to be apprehended prior

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[23] Frege, 'The Thought: A Logical Inquiry', p. 22.

[24] Ibid., p. 35.

to all language-games. For Wittgenstein, truth is to be enacted, played out, lived robustly in a form of living—it creates reality in and through the various language-games.

Wittgenstein does say that Frege's assertion sign serves the formal purpose of marking the beginning of a sentence or upholding the full material content of the sentence. It acts like a full stop distinguishing the period from the clause within the period (*PI* 22). This claim of Frege indeed bears a superficial resemblance with the deflationary theories. However, from Wittgenstein's point of view, what constitutes the actual significance of the assertion sign is its function of *projecting* (though not actually *being*) the device of preventing the possibility of mistaking a part of the content for the whole. In this respect it is rather like the title and end pages or frames of a book or a film, or the gateway and exit to a building, that serve the architectonic requirement of introducing or upholding the book or the building, not containing the full content. Like the title and the end pages or frames of a book or film, or the grand entrance to a mansion, the assertion sign also does not involve the full assertable content of thought to which it is added on.

5.3 *Wittgenstein on Deflationism and T-Schema*

We have already noted that the programme of deflating truth and collapsing it to the truth bearer is a strategy to arrive at a general theory—a neutral generality that would neatly shirk the problematic ontology of facts as well its prodigal variations. The deflationist programme of getting away from an essentialist ontology of facts lands the deflationist in another essentialist programme—the deflated generality of the uniform schema (whether disquotational, propositional or anaphoric) to which all language-games with truth can be assimilated. Such a programme is evidently out of tune with Wittgenstein's philosophical temperament, though unfortunately Wittgenstein's equation in *PI* 136, viz., 'p is true = p', led Kripke to read Wittgenstein as a deflationist.[25]

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[25] Putnam, *The Threefold Cord*, p. 67.

One can say that for Frege, truth has both a connotational and non-connotational aspect. In so far as it constitutes thought or the sense of an indicative sentence, it is paradigmatically connotational; and so far as it—alongwith falsity—constitutes the bare and uniform referent of all true and false sentences (respectively), irrespective of all difference pertaining to their sense, it is non-connotational. Now for the deflationist, truth is purely non-connotational in a sense different from Frege. But as we have seen, the deflationist, in order to nominalise the truth bearer, invests it with a determinate semantic and syntactic boundary which can, so to speak, trigger off the truth-name. Truth in its task of baptising the truth bearer is claimed to bump its head against its outside wall, and thus the deflationist, in the process of deflating the connotational load of truth, inflates the truth bearer and truth with a non-connotational load. In other words, the truth predicate attains its non-connotational transparency only at the cost of assuming the semantic and syntactic transparency of the truth bearer.

For Wittgenstein, it is here that the various schemata used by the various editions of the deflationist schemata falter. This is again an occasion to realise that for him, the failure of the deflationist schemata—striving to equate the truth predicate and the truth bearer in a nominal or non-substantival way—goes deeper than the typical categories of ambiguity (within and across languages), contingency of truth conditions and meaning, modality, opaque contexts, or indexicality. The gap between language and what it relates to cannot be categorised under the above-mentioned types, as if these categories are merely occasional digressions in an otherwise extensional and transparent connection between language and reality. The proclaimed analyticity of the T-schema can be questioned from the points of view of both Quine and Wittgenstein. For Quine, analyticity or meaning-equation between two words or sentences is always relative to a particular scheme of beliefs or suppositions, which makes analyticity or necessity itself a matter of contingency. Wittgenstein's resistance to analyticity is more

radical. For him, the so-called given data, sensory stimulations or observation sentences are never given as semantically transparent content, enabling one to chart out neat relativistic schemes—schemes required for relativising the notion of analyticity. We have seen that for Wittgenstein, all the proposed truth bearers, and all the proposed bridges between these bearers and their respective meanings, call for interpretations of interpretations in an endless series. Hence, none of these proposed bridges can be formalised as a deflated schema of a presupposition-less and pre-semantic equation between language and meaning.

Like the deflationist, Wittgenstein too would delink truth conditions from meaning and reference, but in a significantly different way. The deflationist would, in upholding semantic and syntactic identity—though bereft of the truth conditions— have to essentialise its meaning and grammatical structure, which is clearly against Wittgensteinian spirit. For Wittgenstein, the reference-games do not necessarily invite the truth-games, for reference-games are possible with commands, exclamations, formulating hypotheses, creating mathematical paradigms. But what further distances Wittgenstein from the deflationists is that these different kinds of language-games are not invested with mutually exclusive essences that will enable the deflationist to collect and baptise the truth-games under the non-connotational name of 'truth'. To attain the semantic transparency of reference and predication, the deflationists are also caught up in a fixed syntactic structure of all statements with truth locutions, thus lapsing into the myth of a thin and generic film or cast, supposedly encasing all language-games with 'truth'. This further demonstrates that the seemingly innocuous claim of truth being only a formal device for generalisation actually lapses into a problematic metaphor of scooping up an infinite mass of individual instances under its deflated umbrella. The deflationist versions that view truth as a formal device of generalisation should remind themselves that statements like 'The next thing that Bill says is true' or 'All statements of the form p or not-p

are true' actually spread out in and through their instantiations, and do not encapsulate the latter.

To address the exact status that Wittgenstein ascribes to the T-schema, we need to rehearse his take on analyticity as exemplified in identity-statements. How would the terminology and the concept of analytic statements figure in Wittgenstein's philosophy? For Wittgenstein, the significance of such statements—exemplified in identity propositions like 'P = P,' 'Every rod has a length,' or 'Every coloured patch fits its own surrounding'—would consist in a play of imagination, where the thing comes out of its socket only to settle back in its niche, like a beam of white light undergoing a dispersal and reversal when passed through crossing prisms. The socket and the thing fitted into it, the white beam of light and the dispersed seven colours are not their respective essences, but paradigms of describing the socket in terms of the socketed, the single beam in terms of its dispersed constituents. (These illustrations have been discussed in different contexts—especially in chapter III, section 2.3, and also chapter IV, section 2.2.) For Wittgenstein, the proposed T-schema too can at most be looked upon as a paradigm of describing the plethora of language-games played with the predicate of truth. The import of the T-schema can at best initiate a dimension to discard or contrast with the other games of command, question, speculation, imagination, prayers—a project that is not confined to the full-fledged and saturated semantics and syntax of the sentence, but in each case creates and recreates it anew.[26]

Wittgenstein cannot be a deflationist for the simple reason that for him, there cannot be a neat, single and compact truth bearer to which the addition and withdrawal of truth can nominalise and denominalise it respectively. This is what Wittgenstein put

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[26] Incidentally, Putnam's observation that the apparently deflationist move of Wittgenstein—in equating 'p' with 'p is true' (*PI* 136)—is merely a grammatical move of impressing the tautologousness of such statements should not obviously be taken in the essentialist direction of absolute synonymy or analyticity. Putnam, *The Threefold Cord*, p. 67.

in a different way when he explained that truth does not fit a truth bearer, but is a constituent part of an entire game. The interesting resemblance that he bears to some versions of the deflationist theories—both with the disquotational as well as the illocutionary versions—needs to be appreciated in its subtle nuances. What the predicate of truth clasps and unclasps is not a bare identity, stripped of all semantic and syntactic content; nor is it a full-fledged proposition, replete with full meaning and grammatical perfection. It is an architectonic starting point, like putting pieces on the board, that expands into a plethora of similar games loosely brought under the characterisation of description or reporting—not governed by an overarching essence of truth/falsity, nor by a determinate reference and satisfaction, but by an overlapping and criss-crossing flow of family resemblances, very much like the flow of the notion of numbers (*PI 65, 67*).

For Wittgenstein, the truth-game is the starting point of a game, and in this sense it is a separate game in its own right; it is not a pre-actional replication of states of affairs or facts. There is no such state of affairs to which the further exercise of commanding, wishing, questioning, or ascription of truth-value can be added from without. What truth achieves is starting off with a rudimentary move in the game, which is to be thickened out progressively in a non-linear fashion. Both reference and truth are minimalist activities, like putting the pieces on a board before starting a game. Strawson has taught us that the referring use of expressions forestalls the question *what* are you talking about, and descriptive function answers the question *what are you saying about it*. (Incidentally, this is the entry with which we had opened the very first chapter of this work.) Similarly, the truth-game too can sometimes be looked upon as the rudimentary move of a game, forestalling the question of what it is that is asserted, denied, commanded, questioned, wished, etc. The truth-game is like a dimension that may often throw up an internal contrast between itself and non-truth-games like wishing, questioning, commanding, etc., just as *freedom* and *length* are

not immaculate chunks, but dimensions that assess an action in terms of how much of the variant factors of external strain and duress it can shirk, how much of the unwanted dimension of breadth and depth an object can discard, how much it can approximate to length as such. Similarly, the truth-games and the referring games can sometimes put up a deactivated activity, internally contrasted with all activities of wishing, commanding, questioning, etc. But just as the actual movements of a game are not linear additions to the pieces put on the board, the non-truth and the non-referring games are not linear additions to the truth-games or the referring games.

Following Putnam, we can summarise the deflationist theory in terms of two pointed pitfalls. First, deflationists failed to perceive that general words like 'statement', 'true', 'refers', 'belief', 'assertion', 'thought', 'language', break into an irreducible plurality of uses—accommodating newer and newer uses at every juncture, resisting any move of lifting them into a second level of an umbrella proposition, trying to subsume all these games under its cover in the shape of a conditional propositions of the second order. Second, they also failed to register that not every practice of 'employing marks and noises' can be regarded as a legitimate usage or a valid language-game, or 'one in which there is the face of meaning at all'.[27] It is the spurious move of clasping a chunk of dead phonemes as ready for receiving the truth predicate that does not add to the flow of truth-games, just as the Augustinian model of object designation actually lapses into a ghost language that does not refer to objects but to letters or sounds, that does not describe facts but sound patterns or punctuation (*PI* 4, also discussed in chapter II, section 1.7).

5.4 *The Extensionalist Stance of Truth*

The special stance of the truth predicate—that of collecting the multifarious cases under a general idiom—viz., 'This is how

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[27] Ibid., p. 69.

things are' or 'This is the case that' is virtually a metaphor of externalising our language from all influence, interaction and interpretation. Just as the extensionalist theories of reference claim to touch the brute identity of the object on its external skin, bereft of all modes of internalisation, some of the truth-games too have the externalist stance of touching the brute fact—the external wall of the event so to speak—that is supposed to remain unaffected by all propositional attitudes of the subject to the statement claimed to be true. This externalist or extensionalist stance vis-à-vis truth has the following implications. Any mode of combining the (supposedly) given facts to progressively complex structures can only be a passive assortment that in no way spills over the given constituents. If the compound fact claims to add anything to the given, then it would be a new fact—a new emergence where the putatively given constituents can no longer be said to retain their identity. Any attempt to generate a new fact out of, and yet dissolve, the old facts already claimed to be given, would be a travesty with regard to facthood. A new fact can be generated from the given facts only at the cost of outgrowing the latter, and in this sense the claim of creating or generating new facts keeping the old constituents intact cannot be a truth claim; this professed generation is a non-factual generation. Since the propositional attitudes like beliefs, desires, etc., can themselves (arguably) obtain as facts, truth claims can be applied to these (mental) facts, but not to any claim of generating new facts from pre-given facts, retaining the latter as intact in its own body. Thus, with the claim of truth as enunciating the externalist stance of propositions, viz., 'This is how things are,' is woven the further claim of truth functions. In other words, to define a proposition in terms of the truth predicate is also to define it in the 'truth-functional' way, where the truth-value of progressively complicated structures never spill over the truth-value of the components; the truth-value of the compound is already tied—uniquely, non-subjectively and non-interpretatively—to what is given as truths at the primordial level. Now, Wittgenstein at *PI* 136 places this connexion between the essentialist or generalist

claim of truth predicates and the truth-functional nature of propositions as a way of displacing this claim in terms of the non-foundational and architectonic character of truth-games. It is in the light of this analysis that we should read the following observations at *PI* 136: 'At bottom, giving "This is how things are" as the general form of propositions is the same as giving the definition: a proposition is whatever can be true or false.' 'And to say that a proposition is whatever can be true or false amounts to saying: we call something a proposition when *in our language* we apply the calculus of truth-functions to it.' Putnam too observes that this extensionalist stance is what *we* take— and that we can add this stance to the truth predicate also goes against the deflationist reading of truth.

5.5 *Wittgenstein beyond the Truth Trichotomy*

Putnam threshes out the pitfalls in all the three theories of truth —substantivism, verificationism and deflationism—insisting that the only option that they are left with is what he calls 'common sense realism', embraced by Wittgenstein and himself. Firstly, he argues that deflationists, in so far as they reduce truth to a convention of matching certain dead marks with betting behaviours (conclusive or partial), suffer a loss of the world, past or present, the sense of normative appraisal that is imbued in every truth claim, viz., the claim of rightness to correspondence with facts. The deflationist move of taking away this robust sense of reality as truth makers and imposing verification conditions in its stead is artificial, strenuously contrived and philosophically puerile. This is specially palpable in the deflationist move of treating the truth predicate in all statements of the syntactic shape '"p or not-p" is true' (including sentences of such notorious types as those on Lizzie Borden or twin prime) as merely consisting in a high degree of assertability and level of confidence, leaving out any investment in the sheer reality of one of the alternative incidents happening in the past. But Putnam reminds us of the all-important point: to say that the truth claim

of sentences depends on sheer reality and not on the assignment of verificational conventions is not to say that our truth claims are grounded on a substantive property that actually forges the link between language and reality. The deflationists are justified in discarding truth as a foundational property, but they are wrong in replacing it with the conventional properties of verificationist procedures or betting behaviours. This shows that both the metaphysical realist as well as the deflationist share a common point of vacuity or inaneness—that of either asserting or negating the existence of such a queer reality. Dummett's strategy of accepting a full-fledged verificationism (explicitly stipulated procedures), or giving up LEM in special cases of undecided statements, is not the only desirable option that falls out of this exercise. Dummett's scheme of verification fails especially with regard to statements about unobservable entities being true, or statements about the recognition transcendence of truth. Putnam's analysis of how these predicaments in Dummett's position might persuade us to follow the Wittgensteinian track will be laid out in the following section.

5.6 *Wittgenstein's Treatment of the Recognition-Transcendence of Truth*

The crux of Wittgenstein's resistance to a verificationist reduction of meaning in general and 'truth' language in particular cannot but be quite obvious at this stage. Any verification procedure that may be stipulated to cash out the meaning of a sentence actually derives its meaning from a prior exercise—a pre-verbal attitude and action. Hence, a verification technique cannot be explicitly prescribed to supply the meaning of a sentence. This becomes more palpable in Putnam's ingenious analysis of certain examples of a recalcitrant nature that may be specially contrived to prove the primacy of the verificationist theory. How can one make statements about 'unobservable entities' or 'things too small to see' to be 'true', unless some verification techniques with microscopes are specifically stipulated as their meaning?

Here Putnam points out that for Wittgenstein, our primitive and pre-verbal attitudes have a natural orientation beyond a verified and observed space, and this attitude extends into a linguistic activity. And our linguistic activities with regard to unobserved space or objects are presupposed by our description of verification procedures, and hence the latter cannot serve as the substitutes of the former.

Take a child's reaction of utter surprise at a magician's trick of making a handkerchief vanish. This reaction is conceptually sensitive to a distinction between handkerchiefs that she has seen so far and the present one that was made to vanish. And it makes perfect sense to say that her pre-verbal wonder has the potential for sophisticated articulations like 'Handkerchiefs do not vanish into thin air,' or rather, 'No handkerchiefs vanish into thin air like that,' or further, 'No observed handkerchiefs vanish into thin air like that.' Our primitive reactions always have a tendency to form an enclosure vis-à-vis what lies *beyond* the enclosure—i.e., to stretch on to a continuum beyond what we can see. This is why adults can use these kinds of primitive reactions of children as a starting point to teach them the uses of the words 'All' and 'No', i.e., the range of observations as distinguished from the unobservable. Here again, Putnam falls back on Wittgenstein's notion of seeing and knowing as consisting in 'fine shades of behaviour', viz., those fine shades of behaviour that a child displays with respect to a magician's trick, the way she carries on her normal expectations about the other handkerchiefs (or other objects) that she will confront in the near future, as not vanishing into thin air. All these behaviours of the child will be significantly opposed to that of an infant, whose behaviours are yet to be sensitised to these fine shades of distinction. Thus the distinctions between the meanings of 'All' and 'No', observed and 'unobserved regions', will always be an extension of the non-verbal behaviours and attitudes, not to be cashed out in terms of the conventional stipulation of verificational procedures.

Putnam offers a more pointed expression of insight with respect to another example, viz., 'There are no intelligent extraterrestrials.' Let us note that this conjecture is not verifiable even *in principle*, even with the aid of cutting-edge technology or super-fast spaceships—for the simple reason that this verification harks back on a self-contradictory notion of traversing the limits of a limitless space. Obviously the verificationists would seek to cash out the meaning of the above sentence with a highly specified range of verification procedures within a stipulated limit of space, qualified with stipulated kinds of beings and activities that would count as extraterrestrial beings or their intelligent behaviours. Interestingly, such an attempt would be self-refuting—for the meaning of the above sentence is virtually an extension of our non-verbal negotiations with space, a negotiation that does not allow a stoppage against the limit of space, so to speak. Hence the stipulation of verification procedures have to feed on the meaning of the above sentence that is already enacted and activated through pre-verbal behaviours, and cannot be furnished by the verification procedures.

It is to be noted that Putnam's analysis of these two examples does not only refute verificationism, but also refutes the metaphysical realist position which claims that our use of truth predicates with regard to unobserved entities and unverified space is determined by the matching ontology. For Putnam and Wittgenstein, our language for unobserved entities is an extension of our non-verbal behaviours and attitudes directed beyond the range of observation, and it is this indefinite and incomplete behaviour of moving beyond the limits of present behaviour—and not the ontological existence of limitless space—that shapes our language about the unlimited and the unobservables.

Putnam also asks us to steer clear of the cognitive-scientist theories of truth and meaning which may seem to come as attractive offshoots of the verification theories. According to cognitive science, all perceptual inputs are formatted by the brain into syntactic units and are operated by rules of syntactic manipulation. All semantic data are fed into this pre-given

circuit, which in turn determines all semantic and syntactic recursions of the verbal units from one unit to the others. Once the syntactic and semantic repeatability is ensured, the structure and logical form of propositions is also ensured thereby, laying the ground for constructing logical arguments that would capture the pattern of verification. Thus for Putnam, cognitive science with its repertoire of the brain as the independent computational mechanism is merely an obscurantist version of the verificationist procedure of putting a putatively pre-semantic ground of understanding meaning as prior to understanding meaning—both sharing the faulty presupposition of an isomorphic correspondence between method and practice, syntax and semantics.

Putnam concedes that often talk about subatomic particles depends on new technical details about new laws and their connexions to experiments, and these new technical procedures are delinked from our ordinary talk and practices of contrastive progressions, as with the levels of adjectives like 'small', 'smaller', 'still smaller', etc. Nor can our talk of 'people too small to see' be absorbed in the same flow with this continuum, for we cannot make sense of people having the same metabolic structure as we do, and yet being beyond the range of observability. The meaning of such talk does require a new verification procedure—a change of meaning from the old flow of concepts. But while we have to concede that a great deal of scientific talk is dependent on the thick scientific procedures of verification, we must understand this with a necessary qualification. Scientific instruments and procedures gradually extend our perceptual and conceptual powers; they do not constrain our cognitive powers to shape a unique and fixed meaning once for all.

Putnam pointedly insists that in many cases, our talk about things too small to see—say about molecules—bears the same sense as talk of objects larger than molecules; and along the same lines one can argue that our truth claims about observable range have the same sense as those regarding an unobservable past, an insight that Dummett refuses to acknowledge. Following Cora

Diamond's critique of Dummett's reading of Wittgenstein's view of mathematics,[28] Putnam exposes Dummett's failure to see the same 'sense' in two mathematical activities, and reads this along the same lines as his failure to see the same 'sense' as percolating from the truth claim about the observable to the truth claim about the unobservable. Cora Diamond conceives two slightly different but related mathematical activities of counting, which may be named C and D. In activity C the agent or the user is informed about the several norms of counting—that counting must be progressive, that one should not coalesce units, that one should not leave out units, etc. In this activity, the counter is able to detect his mistake in arriving at different outcomes in counting the same row if and only if he detects his mistake in flouting any of these norms. In activity D, he is able to detect his mistake in arriving at different outcomes in counting the same row *independently of detecting his specific mistakes*, like leaving out units, counting a unit twice, changing the direction of counting midway, overlooking an unpredictable occurrence of a coalescing or splitting of units.

For Dummett, activity D is following a new convention—that of disallowing any change in the outcome of counting any row—which is an extra add-on to the convention that the counter has already learnt with respect to activity C. Dummett fails to see that for Wittgenstein, learning the above-mentioned norms of counting with the aid of experience is the same as learning the irrevocable number of units in each row, despite any unpredictable empirical behaviour of empirical objects. Learning the empirical methods of correct counting has the same sense as keeping one's eyes closed to experience, for once the experience of finding the outcome of a row is settled, we also learn the game of freezing the experience into definitions, so that (if we do happen to arrive at a different outcome for a row) even if we do not detect any experience of miscounting, we still say

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[28] Putnam refers to 'The Face of Necessity', chapter 9 in Cora Diamond, *The Realistic Spirit* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991).

'I must have miscounted.' Putnam argues that the failure to see the same 'sense' in both these mathematical activities of C and D is the same as the failure to see the same expression in two faces, though the two faces may differ in the length or breadth of their eyes, nose or mouth, or their respective positioning. It is the failure to see that activating the paradigm in counting each unit in a row is the same as activating the paradigm in counting the outcome of the entire row; the latter does not need to add a new convention. The absence of a metaphysical foundation in the shape of Platonic numbers as underlying our modes of counting does not force us to the other option of Dummettian anti-realism, viz., the adoption of new conventions at every stage. The way Wittgenstein escapes the dilemma between 'something besides' and 'nothing but' (the respective slogans of metaphysical realism and anti-realism) smoothly extends to his approach to truth. Understanding 'Lizzie Borden killed her parents with an axe' is the same sentence as understanding '"Lizzie Borden killed her parents with an axe" is true,' and this neither requires a transcendent or a detemporalised fact underlying the application of our truth predicate, nor does it require a new verification procedure radically independent of our normal language-games with ordinary objects. It is the flow of meanings from truth predicates about present objects to past events whose occurrence or non-occurrence we do not know of, through a series of overlapping similarities, that fleshes out the meaning of the latter.

There are some specific examples and suggestions furnished by Wittgenstein himself that Putnam could have used to bring out this crucial insight. Wittgenstein had clearly stated that there is no absolute boundary between an object and its other that gives meaning to the talk of 'measurement of an absolute quantity'. What gives meaning to such talk is the practice of using more and more sophisticated techniques of measurement—a ruler progressively shedding its thickness or jagged edges, or a series of measuring devices progressively noting the part of the measured object left out by the previous device (*PI*. p. 225).

Certain other reflections on our use of the word 'understanding' with respect to 'absolute motion' or 'absolute velocity' clearly deny its being grounded on an ontological terminus of space, and invite a mode of treatment similar to the above example. It is only natural to think of 'understanding absolute motion or velocity' in terms of contrastive juxtapositions of ascending layers of space, where the relativities in the planetary motions of the lower level are resolved on the immediately higher level through an essentially incomplete process (*PI*, p. 53n).

Interestingly, Dummett perhaps had read these suggestions of Wittgenstein in the conventionalist or verificationalist direction, taking these apparently recognition-transcendent notions as being cashable in newly stipulated procedures of verification. But for Wittgenstein, it is our pre-verbal attitude to an indefinite expansion of space—both in the outward and inward direction—that extends into sophisticated constructions of computerised models of ascending levels of space or progressive thinning out of the measuring devices in an unending process. So also for our language-games with truth that breaks through the closure of metaphysical realism and conventionalist stipulations of anti-realism into natural reactions and participation.

One can perhaps add that the examples Dummett presents in favour of discarding bivalence ironically betray a reverse commitment. Wittgenstein would say that the so-called epistemic gap pertaining to putatively unverifiable sentences itself feeds on a gratuitous assumption that is shared commonly by both the realists and the anti-realists. For instance, the acclaimed indeterminacy of the statement (noted in section 1 of this chapter), viz., 'There is some substance—uranium—present in some region of the universe,' is based on the determinate meaning of 'uranium', and a uniquely given spatio-temporal framework as an empty, pre-existing container containing uranium. It is only under such presuppositions that an uncaptured stretch of the container, reaching beyond given dimensions, and containing the unperceived chunk of the uranium, would make sense. In other words, it is only with a basic presupposition of

determinate reference and satisfaction, grafted in a bivalent scheme, that the anti-realist can launch an attack against the verification conditions.

For Wittgenstein, truth, meaning and verification find a special blend in passages where he observes that a question of verification is a question of meaning—or rather, a particular way of asking 'How do you mean?' It is rather a question more fundamental than that of meaning; it is a question about grammar—about how the words in the relevant sentence are stationed, what generic or sortals concepts (like colour, number, position, direction, etc.) they embody (*PI* 353). We have seen (in chapter I of this work) that these sortals concepts are not semantically foundational; they are 'fundamental' only in the sense of taking the question of meaning to a more expansive realm of uses. Finding the truth is not approximating the fact, but defining and redefining facts and truth in terms of playing up the descriptive games, and pushing the vast corpus of non-descriptive games to the periphery.

In fine, Wittgenstein views reality as being shaped in and through our behaviours, and our linguistic behaviour is a sophisticated extension of our non-linguistic behaviour. Thus, language being an extension of reality, there is no cleavage between truth bearers (propositions, sentences, statements, beliefs, names, predicates) on the one hand and truth makers (facts, situations, states of affairs, referents, properties) on the other. The project of setting up these two as neatly separable items and finding ways to connect them through various devices like correspondence, coherence, pragmatics, causation, reference, satisfaction, stipulated verification techniques or baptism, etc., has been sought to be displaced in Wittgenstein's philosophy.

6. The Deflationary Theory of Reference: Analysis of Arvid Bave's Paper

Once we navigate the deflationary theories of truth to their 'referential' counterparts, we can construct a parallel account of

how Wittgenstein worked out his own way beyond the dichotomy of substantivist and non-substantivist theories of reference as well. The general spirit of the substantive theories of reference is not difficult to imagine: corresponding to the substantial truth makers (facts, events, moments, tropes, n-tuples), these theorists would invoke reference makers or referents—pre-linguistic or pre-semantic chunks of objects that may be complex or simple, variant or invariant, a world-specific or transworld entity, contingent or necessary. In parallel, the general spirit of the deflationary or non-substantive theories of reference can safely be predicted: whatever be the entitative status of the referent, that ontological content does not enter into the reference predicate, the addition of the term 'refers' does not add anything substantial to the referring expression. Corresponding to the deflationary truth theories, there are three major versions of the deflationary theory of reference, viz., disquotational theory, propositional theory and anaphoric theory—respectively endorsed by Field, Horwich and Brandom.[29] Bave[30] presents a critical analysis of each of these theories, matching them up with the respective pitfalls of their parent theories of truth. He follows this up with his theory of reference in terms of *aboutness*. While he claims that his theory is better than the other models of reference (whether of deflationary or substantive character), we shall have to show how his new construction of reference in terms of 'about' too falls in the same foundational trap as the other theories, failing to pose any new challenge to Wittgenstein's enterprise.

6.1 *Disquotational (DQ) Theory of Reference*

Bave explains that the natural extension of the DQ theory of truth is '"a" refers to a' (D), a schema that is claimed to be exhaustive of the notion of reference, just as in the DQ theory, the T-schema was claimed to be exhaustive of the notion of

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[29] See footnote 12.

[30] I rely exclusively on Bave's paper, 'A Deflationary Theory of Reference', for both the exposition and the criticism.

truth. Though he does not subscribe to this view, yet Bave concedes that this theory correctly explains the strength of these two terms—'truth' and 'reference'—in terms of their expressive power. We have seen that in the case of truth, this expressive power was manifested in presenting a compact shorthand of a finite or even infinite number of propositions, and effecting a semantic ascent.

Now, to the simplest schema of the DQ theory of reference stated above, Horwich gives a more complex enunciation:

Tokens of *n*, refer, if at all, to n (DR).

It is to be noted that the special quotation marks '*' are intended to disambiguate 'n' with respect to a particular language, as opposed to possible homophony in other languages or within the same language.

We have already noted the main weakness of the DQ theory of truth, viz., that the primary truth bearer (sentence) cannot be identified in its minimal syntactic structure without some input into the semantic content, We may even add that the insistence on a purely syntactic identity of the sentence will not hold good without fully articulated rules that would connect certain phonemes or written marks (their shapes and sizes and design) with word units, phrase units, punctuation, etc. These rules will obviously have to fall back on the notion of reference—into its DQ version. And Bave argues that the major lacuna in the DQ theory of truth passes into the DQ schema of reference as well. Just as the equation between '"s" is true' and 's' (i.e., the truth predicate serving the function of mere nominalisation and denominalisation of 's') does not take care of the meaning content of 's' by virtue of which 's' can be said to be true, similarly the DQ schema of reference—even when upgraded in terms of the disambiguated referrer—misses the verbal rule or ostensive definitions for reference, the conventions of baptism, and above all the prior knowledge of the meaning of 'refers' as well as of the quotation marks underlying the schema itself. It is doubtful

whether the mere schema of the DQ equation—whether in its revised or unrevised form—can replace the vital requirements of reference that are presupposed in the formulation of the equation itself.

There are other more specific parallels between the respective defects of both the DQ theories of truth and reference. The first problem pertains to modality: it is obvious that DR prefixed by the necessity operator is not equivalent to its unqualified form owing to the contingency of the semantic conventions. Bave however suggests that we try to waive this difficulty by recasting DR as:

Tokens of *n*, *actually* refer, if at all, to n.

Problems pertaining to the propositional attitude contexts will recur with the DQ schema of reference as well, even with respect to the refined formulation. Just as '"S" is true' and 'S' do not mean the same, similarly 'that which tokens of *n* actually refer to' and 'n' do not mean the same. A user or subject may believe or know that a is F without knowing that the person to whom tokens of *a* refer is in fact F. I may know that my next door neighbour (who happens to be Alexander Kluge) is a film director without knowing his name, i.e., without knowing that the person referred to by the tokens of *Alexander Kluge* is a film director.

Lastly, once the DQ schema of reference too is spelled out in terms of an indexical—say 'The tokens of *I* if at all actually refer to I'—this will confront the patent problem of the two occurrences of 'I' referring to different targets, the second occurrence referring to the speaker of the DQ schema, while this is clearly not the intended referent of tokens of *I*.

In view of the above problems, Bave reports that Horwich suggests two more refinements on the DQ schema of reference:

1. v is the correct translation of $w \rightarrow (x)$ v refers to x iff w refers to x

2. $[Int\ (w) = *n*] \rightarrow (x)\ w$ refers to x iff $x = n$

('Int' stands for a function that maps an indexical to a name referring to the same thing, relative to the context in question.)

However, Bave reminds us of the obvious irony of these schema being already phrased in terms of reference, and thus their failure to cash out or dispense with this crucial term. He also points out that the so-called refined schema of reference fail to be theories of reference at all—deflationary or otherwise—simply because the notion of reference is sought to be defined in terms of translation or indexicals, whereas it is clearly a notion independent of these two.

Bave observes that the main defect of the DQ theory of truth and reference is its respective assumptions that truth belongs to sentences and that the relation of reference obtains between the expression and objects. He suggests that to overcome these limitations, one should conceive truth as primarily belonging not to sentences, but rather to what is *said by sentences*; and reference as not belonging to expressions, but as pertaining to the *use* of expressions by the speaker. One need not mention that these insights were activated long back by philosophers like Austin, Grice, Strawson, and in a more original way by later Wittgenstein.

6.2 *Propositionalist Deflationism*

Horwich formulates the propositional theory of reference in terms of a thickened notion of reference, which he coins as 'reference*', where the referring expression is a propositional constituent. The initial scheme of propositional deflation of reference runs thus:

(P) (x) $(<n>$ refers* to x iff $n = x)$.

This schema avoids the undesirable consequences of the contingency of meaning rules, the fear of homophonic sentences

in a different language turning out to have a different referent, for in so far as '$< n >$' refers to a propositional constituent expressed by n, it is secured as a unit of language or meaning, and the possibility of 'grass' in a different language referring to snow is ruled out by the fact that grass snow. Further, since reference* is a technical notion, Horwich moves from this to the wider and commoner notion of reference. Once the task of reference* is performed by a propositional constituent, there is the further leeway of its being expressed by other expressions— and all such expressions can perform the task of referring, i.e., referring in the wider sense of the term. He enunciates this wider notion of reference in the following schema:

(PD) w refers to x iff ($\exists k$) w expresses k and k refers* to x.

This theory, by prioritising the notion of propositional constituent, seems to be able to solve the problems pertaining to translation and indexicals. For instance, one can hold that 'e' translates 'e_1' iff 'e' and 'e_1' express the same propositional constituent. The incidence of the same indexical expression referring to different items in different contexts will also be solved by noting which propositional constituent is expressed by a particular indexical, and thereby the different referents relating to different contexts can be determined.

This invocation of the propositional constituent seems to be a natural counterpart of its parallel invocation of propositions in the theory of truth. Indeed, if the problems pertaining to sentences as truth bearers in the DQ theory of truth invites the substitution of propositions for sentences in the propositionalist theory of truth, similar problems faced by the DQ theory of reference will invite a substitution of propositional constituents for sentential constituents. But the saving grace of propositional constituents is only apparent, for like propositions, this notion too is dubious and gratuitous. Bave claims that there is a way of avoiding the problems of referential DQ within the deflationary framework, without committing oneself to propositional

constituents, by the simple trick of taking reference to be the relation between speakers and things—a theory which is well in tune with the actual usage of the term 'refers'. Horwich's theory is an ironic inconsistency between his professed claim to reflect the ordinary usage of 'refers' and his dismissal of the role of the speaker in his referential scheme.

Bave also argues that Horwich will not be able to maintain the required distinction between propositional constituent and the referent with respect to the singular propositions—like Salman Rushdie is a Pakistani—whereby the relation of reference turns out to be a relation between an object and itself. He further insists that Horwich cannot possibly invoke *de dicto* propositional constituents corresponding to names, for this flatly contradicts the non-connotative theory of names upheld by Kripke (Bave's trend of argument provokes an obvious comment to be taken up later in more detail, viz., that the rejection of propositional constituent does not tie one to a non-connotative reference.)

However, Bave rightly objects that Horwich's technical contrivance of a propositional constituent fails to explain the notion of reference. Contrary to his (Horwich's) professed standpoint that the speaker has the primary disposition to accept (P) as an explanation for the use of the word 'reference', the common speakers, as a matter of fact, do not know the meaning of $<n>$, and are simply not disposed to accept the formulation as explaining the notion of reference. Bave further asserts that there is no expression in ordinary language that is a hyponym to 'propositional constituent'. Horwich cannot possibly claim that all ordinary uses of 'refers' are actually derivative, falling back on the original notion of the propositional constituent. This would mean that whenever we utter the sentence '"a" refers to b', we are speaking loosely or abbreviatively; i.e., we really mean that 'a' is related to some propositional constituent that refers to b. This would further invoke some unpalatable assumptions, viz., the function of reference being unconscious— i.e., whenever we use the term 'refer' we implicitly take the

relation of reference to obtain between things and propositional constituents. Such a hypothesis is unacceptable, for the concepts really meant by 'reference' should be consciously grasped by the speaker. Bave voices our natural reactions to Horwich's theory with the obvious remark: 'The idea about implicit, unconscious grasping of technical concepts is starting to look rather gratuitous.' Accepting this will throw open further implausible suggestions—when we speak as if it is people who know things, we unconsciously or implicitly mean that it is abstract objects called 'sapientia' that know things.[31]

6.3 *Brandom's Anaphoric Theory of Reference*

The pro-sentential theory of truth was first presented by Grover and later developed by Brandom into both a truth-theoretic as well as a reference-theoretic version. Brandom dubbed the reference theory as an 'anaphoric theory'. Though neither of these theories of truth or reference uses an explicit equational schema, yet Brandom puts both of them under the deflational category.

Brandom formulates his anaphoric theory of reference in the following format:

(*t*) the *F* the speaker referred to as *t*

Obvious instantiations of this schema would be: 'the person referred to as "Jones"' or 'the mechanic Joe referred to as "that airhead"'. Here, 't' stands proxy for the name of a linguistic expression and 'F' stands for a general term. What distinguishes these anaphoric descriptions from ordinary definite descriptions is that unlike the latter, these anaphoric phrases, like pronouns, trail behind a prior identity. They are called indirect descriptions because they describe through the mediation of a prior reference. The speciality of the anaphoric model of reference is that while ordinary anaphors like 'he' (in 'The senator rose and he spoke')

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[31] Ibid., p. 58.

do not contain the original expression (i.e., 'the senator'), referential anaphors according to Brandom should contain the original expression which was uttered *before* the utterance of the entire anaphoric description. Thus, both the referential anaphors, viz., 'the person referred to as "Jones"' and 'the mechanic Joe referred to as "that airhead"' contain the original expression 'Jones' and 'that airhead' respectively.

The generic form of anaphoric reference is that an iteration of the expression is to be inter-substitutable with the original, where an iteration of 'What "t" refers to' is 'What "what t refers to"'. Bave however says that the analysis of the expressions of the form (t) is counterintuitive; even more so is Brandom's insistence that every other sentence containing 'refers' or its equivalents should be straitjacketed into sentences containing expressions of the form t. The demand for a unique format of paraphrasing sentences with reference locutions cannot fulfil the vital function of explaining or accounting for the notion of reference.

Bave further points out a discrepancy between the respective ways in which the usual anaphors (like pronouns) and the indirect descriptions presented as anaphoric referrers work. The sentence 'If Leibnitz is F then he is F' is a priori and necessary, for the anaphor 'he' has exactly the same content as 'Leibnitz'. If the referential schema, like 'The term "Leibnitz" denotes Leibnitz' or its paraphrase 'The one denoted by the term "Leibnitz" = Leibnitz' work anaphorically, they should have the same content as Leibnitz = Leibnitz. But neither of these two referential formulae is necessarily a priori. The failure of the DQ theories of truth and reference in establishing the a priori status of their schema recurs in both the pro-sentential or anaphoric models of truth and reference.

Brandom argues that the fact that the person referred to as 'Leibnitz' may not actually be Leibnitz does not jeopardise the anaphoric theory of reference. It only shows that the possible situation of there being a language with homophonic names, say 'Leibnitz', but having a reference other than the actual person Leibnitz, has to be rephrased as: 'The one referred to as

"Leibnitz" in w (i.e., the person referred to as "Leibnitz" which is a token of the non-actual type "Leibnitz") is not Leibnitz.' It is in this way that the contingency of reference relations can be accounted for, and yet the anaphoric model of reference can be maintained. Bave, however, is not ready to accept this defence proposal of an anaphoric expression uttered in the actual world having a non-actual tokening as its antecedent. Besides, even if this relation is granted, the paradigmatic anaphors like 'he' in natural language never have cross-reference to non-actual expressions. Thus, while 'p' may not refer to p, an anaphor not referring to its actual antecedent is not possible; and for Bave, this shows that reference does not obtain in the anaphoric model. In fine, the anaphoric theory of reference fails to explain the contingency of reference relations and thereby remains insensitive to the difference between the two propositions—'The term "Leibnitz" denoted Leibnitz' and 'Leibnitz = Leibnitz.'

Bave points out that if the anaphoric theory of reference boils down to nothing more than the inter-substitutability of 'a' and 'the one referred to by "a"' and its paraphrases, then it holds no special status other than the simple DQ schema of '"a" refers to a.' Similarly, its counterpart in the truth theory, holding that '"that snow is white" is true' is a pro-sentence with respect to 'snow is white,' makes no significant addition to the simple equivalence claim of these two phrases in a DQ schema.

Bave has indeed tracked down the vulnerable areas of the deflationary theories of reference, viz., their presupposing the crucial notion of reference itself, their getting bogged down with a propositional constituent, their failure to retain a natural disposition towards the use of the term 'refers'. Let us see whether his theory is able to break through this maze of deflation routes to an appreciable extent.

6.4 *Bave's Theory of Reference*

Bave seeks to explain the notion of reference in terms of the notion of *about*. His defining schema runs as follows:

(A) That S(t) is about t

where S(t) is the format of a singular proposition and () holds the place for a singular term. (Bave is ready to make this slot available for all singular terms, including indexicals, natural kind terms, abstract nouns, plurals, and arguably definite descriptions.) What is especially noteworthy for this theory is that it regards the relation of aboutness to hold not between words and objects (as in Horwich's schema), but between proposition and object, and it further claims to be an implicit and analytic definition of 'about'. However, Bave goes on to assure us at the same time that the formula (A) is neither committed to the propositional constituents of Horwich, nor 'by itself' to propositions, but only to the 'that-clause as a grammatical expedient.

Bave says that in order to understand 'refer' in terms of 'about', the above formula (A) has to be expanded into (A₁): That S(t) says something which is about t. Thus, sentences like 'He believes something about John,' or 'He dreamt about x,' should be taken as abbreviations for 'He believes something which is about John,' or 'I dreamt something that is about x.' The 'about' locution may also have to be formulated in an interrogative format, i.e., 'whether S(t) is about t', in order to handle cases like 'He was asking about you.'

There may be a further controversy on whether the formula (A) restricts 't' to its literal meaning, or whether it allows a substitution in terms of a related locution or a generic concept under which t can be subsumed. Thus, when someone says 'The conservatives will win,' she can, in a loose sense, be talking both about the conservatives and politics; but in a strict sense, only about conservatives. It is only sentences like 'Politics is a dirty business' that will pass the test of satisfying (A), and be about politics.

Next, Bave goes on to concede that it is primarily propositions and not sentences that are about things. The sentential formulations in terms of existential quantifiers are not always sensitive to the fact of whether F(t) is about t or an

existential statement about a unique instance of the concept t (the celebrated distinction between referring use and attributive use of referring expressions enunciated mainly by Strawson and Donnellan). We know that it is the specific contexts that determine whether F(t) is about t or an existential statement stating the existence of an instance of the *concept t*. However, if F(t) is upgraded to the full status of a proposition, it would absorb all contextual relativities to rise above the context. If we appreciate that aboutness pertains to propositions, we also realise that aboutness is not contextual. It is sentences that fall back on contexts in order to elevate themselves to propositions that are independent of contexts.

Once the notion of *about* is decontextualised in terms of propositions, Bave goes on to define reference in terms of a speaker 'a':

(R) a refers to b iff a says something which is about b.

The question arises whether Bave's revised notion of reference in terms of *saying something about* is deflationary or not, i.e., whether the deflationary character of *about* effectually thins out the notion of reference as well. Bave presents a further revised formulation of R:

(R_1) a refers to b iff there is an S ( ) such that a says that S(b).

This formula, by quantifying into the sentence context position, just upholds the object without addressing any of its content. For this, Bave claims it to have a deflationary character that is more pronounced than the previous versions. And he claims that the advantage of R and R_1 is that they fit into the normal usage of 'refers' as holding between the speaker and the object. The common philosophical usage of 'refers' holds between expression and object, and is thus formulated as '"e" refers to a.' Bave says that this is a truncated formula which actually is elliptical for '"e" is used by the speaker in question to refer to

a,' which in its turn is further elliptical for '"e" is used by the speaker in a sentence, so as to say that …'. This phenomenon of ellipsis Bave dubs as 'attributive ellipsis' in contrast with syntactic ellipsis (sluicing or VP ellipsis, etc.). He says that the sentence '"e" refers to x,' like the sentence 'The experience is green,' is syntactically anomalous and calls for a pragmatic exercise of expanding it to something like: 'that "e" is used by the relevant class of speakers to refer to x'. As this expansion is a pragmatic phenomenon, the vagueness of the added qualifier 'something like' is inevitable. It may be noted in this connection that while for Strawson '"e" refers to a' is a category-mistaken sentence, for Bave the semantic anomalousness of such a sentence is a matter of attributive ellipsis that is a pragmatic phenomenon, and in this respect this position is much closer to that of Searle. This enunciation of 'reference' grows out of common usage, economically binding it with philosophical usage as well.

Bave claims that his theory of reference handles the issue of indexicals and foreign expressions better than that of Horwich. Equipped with the richer notion of 'a speaker using the expression to say that' the reference of an indexical, say 'I', has to be phrased out as 'a utters a sentence containing "I", i.e., S(I),' which has to be further recast as 'a says S(a) which is about a.' The reference to foreign expressions like 'La Tour Eiffel' has to be treated as: 'The sentence containing "La Tour Eiffel" can be used in French to say that the Eiffel Tower is tall,' 'the Eiffel Tower is lean,' etc., and all these sentences are about the Eiffel Tower. Bave claims his theory of reference to be superior to that of Horwich. While Horwich required an extra device of an identity relation between expressions in order to handle indexicals and foreign expressions, and worked within the confined framework of the mere expression and object—bereft of the user—Bave claims his theory to be superior on all these counts.

On similar lines, the defects of the DQ schema '"s" is true iff s' where truth is superficially attached to sentences is to be read as elliptical for something like 'What s says is true', or 'what s is used to say is true.' The dependence of sentence truth upon

contexts is to be rephrased as: 'I am hungry' uttered by a says that a is hungry; and 'Schnee ist Weiss' in German says that snow is white. The sentence 'Believe him' is to be read as 'Believe what he says.'

The question arises whether Bave's theory of reference increases the expressive power of language, as claimed by other deflationary versions of truth and reference. Bave attempts to give a neat formulation of what is meant by the expressive power of language in order to see whether his locutions of 'about' and 'truth' pass the test. Let us try to spell out the necessary and sufficient conditions of an expression 'e' (here 'is true' or 'is about') as increasing the expressive power of language L. (*a*) There has to be at least one sentence containing 'e' and other expressions of L. (*b*) That sentence of L has to entail a set of statements that do not contain (i.e., successfully substitute) 'e' (i.e., 'is true' or 'is about'). (*c*) This set of statements is not entailed by any other statement of L. Thus, 'Everything he says is true' entails statements of the form: 'If he says that p then p.' Evidently this case of entailment satisfies all the prescribed criteria. Now Bave demonstrates the expressive power of 'about' in L in a similar fashion. Let us take the example: I believe everything he said about Quine. Now (*a*) this sentence contains 'e' (about) and other expressions of L (English). (*b*) This sentence entails a set of statements like: If he says S(Q) (a proposition of the form Quine is φ) then I believe S(Q) and if he says $S_1 Q$ then I believe $S_1 Q$ and if he says $S_2 Q$ then I believe $S_2 Q$. No other sentence of English entails this series of statements. The original sentence 'I believe what he says about Quine' can be expressed in terms of a second-order quantifier: For all F, if he said that F (Quine), then I believe F (Quine). Thus the 'about' locution attains an expressive strength without any grammatical innovation.

The 'about' locution affords a more restricted class of entailments than that afforded by truth locutions. E.g., 'Everything he said is true' entails everything he said, i.e., supposing he said S_1–S_{1000}, the conjunction of these 1,000

statements forms the entailment set of the original statement; and this statement is not subsumable under any larger set. But the entailment set of 'I believe everything he said about Quine' will not entail anything of the form 'I believe everything he said.' 'I believe everything he said' would form a larger set subsuming those statements entailed by 'I believe everything he said about Quine.' Thus, if A asserted a set of true statements of the form $S_1(b)$, $S_2(b)$, up to $S_{1000}(b)$, these would be entailed by the statement 'Everything A asserted *about* b is true'; whereas if A asserted a set of false statements of the form $S_1(c)$, $S_2(c)$, up to $S_{1000}(c)$, they would not be entailed by the original statement 'Everything he said about c is true.' Thus the statements with 'about' locutions have a specially honed power of expressing, collecting, entailing a more restricted class of statements than the truth schema does.

Bave however is sensitive about the point that the 'about' locution does not touch an immaculate identity of the referred object that becomes specially evident with statements like A asserts//believes/desires/aspires/fears/conjectures/etc. something *about* a. It is unfruitful to say that 'A φs something about a' (the symbol φ obviously standing for all the propositional attitudes) s collects an infinite disjunction of propositions of the form 'A φs that Sa'—for such a formulation obscures rather than clarifies the expressive or inferential power of 'about'. Bave says that sentences of the form 'A φs something about a' is entailed by 'A φs that Sa,' as contrasted with the fact that it is not entailed by 'A (only) φs that p' (that does not contain 'a'). In other words, what lends significance to this entailment is not any immaculate essence of a, but the logical opposition of the purportedly entailed statement to cases where the premises do not mention 'a' at all.

Horwich gives a different account of 'about' which involves three speakers—A, B and C—where 'about' is projected rather as a device for B making a second-order report to C, of a sentence stated by A. This happens when A utters a sentence 'a is F,' where C does not know what a is, but knows it under the

co-referential term b. B would then use a sentence of the form 'A believes about b that it is F.' Here, the 'about' locution becomes a device for lifting a name from a description that is unavailable to the hearer and presenting it under another description that is available to him. Bave points out that this account of Horwich is apparently plausible when 'a' is a description, but not when 'a' is a name. If 'a' figures already as a name, then the further need for deploying 'about' to substitute one description for another does not arise. In the latter case, B's statement should be more convincingly framed as 'A believes that a is F and a = b,' i.e., without deploying the 'about' locution.

Bave points out that while the deflationary theories of truth and reference, particularly Horwich's minimalism, professedly neutralise all ontological commitments to facts, correspondence, referential identity, etc., their respective schema or formulae entail the law of bivalence. We had noted in the very first section that to use truth or reference even as a formal device for nominalisation and generalisation of sentences, the determinateness of reference and predication and thereby the determinacy of truth-value has to be accepted; and in this respect the deflationary theory is metaphysically committed to a denial of anti-realism. Yet Bave concedes that in another sense, the minimalist theories of truth and reference may be said to be neutral about the debate between realism and anti-realism for the simple reason that the anti-realist proposal that S is true depends on x (mind, language, culture, etc.) actually reduces/deflates merely to the statement that S depends on x. In other words, the statement that anti-realism is true reduces simply to the statement of anti-realism, and hence does not affect the minimalist view of truth. For *ex hypothesi*, the minimalist theories bypass the ontological nature of truth (whether truth is relative or absolute, etc.) and hence can be content with smoothly carrying over the minimalist or deflationary exercise to the truth claim of truth relativism itself. The crucial point is that no sentence bereft of truth-value is accommodated in any version of the theory of deflationism. Similarly, while the deflationary theories of reference claim to

bypass all questions about the ontological status of the referents, their commitment to bivalence or rather determinate predication rules out all facets of indeterminacy in the referent—whether epistemological or semantic, horizontal or vertical, external or internal.

Bave goes on to analyse more fully the explanatory powers of the original reference formula (A), viz., That S(t) is about t. From A we cannot infer either that there is something that I have a belief about, or its negation. However, A allows the following inference: If I believe Pegasus is a winged horse, I believe something about Pegasus. This would be allowed by common sense, but not by philosophers, because, Bave says, philosophers introduce a new and technical meaning of 'about' that is geared to real objects. For Bave, according to the deflationary theory, a denial of my belief about Pegasus entails a denial of my belief that Pegasus is a winged horse. For according to the deflationary theory, a belief that a is F entails a belief *about* a, and once a *belief-about*, with its mere expressive power of 'about' in collecting all the different cases of *belief that-s*, is *itself* taken away, the latter beliefs cannot be allowed to remain. This shows that for Bave, 'about' does not tally with the purely referential use of an expression, for even in the absence of a referent, as in the case of empty terms like 'Pegasus', an attributive use of the same expression can occur.

According to the deflationist theory of reference, the externalist claim about 'water' referring to the particular liquid on earth having the chemical property of H_2O does not pin down the necessary transworld identity of water—it rather registers that they (externalists) *use* water to say things *about* water, i.e., refer to swater (H_2O of earth). That is to say, the externalist claim about the necessary transworld referent calls for an analysis of *their* use of the referent 'water' in the present case in sentences they state about water. So their statement that 'water' refers to swater or H_2O actually equates with the statement that externalists use 'water' to say things about swater (or refer to H_2O). And this in turn further reduces to a

generalisation over an indefinite number of conjunctions: 'They used "water" to say that swater is cold,' 'They used "water" to say that swater is wet.' etc. The ontological nature of 'water' will not be captured by 'reference' or 'aboutness', but by the predicative position, i.e., whether what is predicated is swater having H_2O composition, etc. Whether the referent (water in the present case) has an extensionalist character over and above the modes of apprehension has to be secured as a predicate; it cannot be secured by the device of reference or aboutness.

Overall, the deflationary theory of reference is neutral to the externalism/internalism debate. According to Bave, the deflationary theory of reference shows that the relation of referring has no power of reaching out to the ontological status of an object, and in this respect neutralises all substantive queries into it. But the deflationist theory cannot dissolve all questions about the relation between linguistic expressions and extra-linguistic objects—it keeps open the possibility of relations, other than reference adequate to capture the ontological status of objects, corresponding to the linguistic expressions. There may be some relation between 'Aristotle' and Aristotle, that goes beyond the mere second-order device of collecting or generalising over the instances of usage, and thus captures the substantial content of Aristotle. We have seen that according to the deflationary theory, reference relation has no tendency or agenda to explain why 'Aristotle' and not 'Plato' can be used to say that Aristotle is F, Aristotle is G, etc. Only after presupposing that the crucial relation between language and reality somehow obtains can the deflationary theory take up its programme of deflating truth and reference of collecting such locutions under a nominalisation or generalisation.

Bave goes on to suggest that this relation of a linguistic expression and an extra-linguistic object is not of reference, but of denotation. But Bave also reminds that it is the empirical findings of the content of our beliefs (e.g., whether our ancients believed water was swater or twater) that decide the further question whether the relation of denotation can give us

informative analysis about the object. A theory of denotation has to settle issues about beliefs beforehand, for a theory of denotation may admit a notion of belief that is different from denotation.

In the long run, Bave maintains that even despite the failures of the informative analysis of denotation, there may be substantive uses with regard to how we relate mentally and linguistically to external objects—on which deflationary theory is neutral. The deflationary theory of *about* fails to relate specifically to *de re* beliefs phrased in terms of 'belief of', for the latter can be phrased without either of the terms 'of' or 'about'.

7. Wittgenstein against Bave and Reference Deflationism

It is not necessary to give a full exposition of Wittgenstein's discord with the deflationary theories of reference. They can be easily constructed, not only from his lines of resistance with the deflationary truth theories (worked out in section 3.6 of this chapter), but also from his key insights on reference, already narrated at length in the foregoing chapters. We may start by rehearsing the main lacuna of reference deflationism: in their efforts to eke out a neat formulation of reference, these theorists presuppose the phenomenon of reference itself—a point already registered by Bave. There may be certain internal details of comparison and contrast between Wittgenstein and reference deflationism that are likely to evoke interest. For instance, some of the referring games illustrated by Wittgenstein have a superficial resemblance with the anaphoric model presented by Brandom. When the builder's assistant responds to the builder's call of 'slab', 'block' 'pillar', 'beam', by placing the appropriate stones at the site, or when a person learns the meanings of words by following the verbal or ostensive definition given by the teacher, these functions of reference seem to be paraphrasable in the anaphoric format: 'the flat stone that the builder referred to as "slab"', or 'the flower that the teacher defined as "the reproductive organ in plants"', or 'the flower

that was shown and named as "flower"'. However, many other referring exercises like putting pieces on the board, the builder's projection of the building materials before the building activity sets off, a language teacher uttering words as a command or instruction for the learner to touch the corresponding object, etc., cannot be subsumed under the unique format prescribed by Brandom. It is more important to realise that for Wittgenstein, the deflationary schemes of reference will not work even for a limited number of cases. This is for the simple reason already mentioned—to deflate the ontology of the referent, the reference schemata have to uphold the referring expression in its semantic and syntactic identity. But for Wittgenstein, one can uphold the referring expression only as an architectonic starting point—as the rudimentary move of putting the pieces on board before one has started to play. The proposed semantic and syntactic identity in the reference schema fleshes out in an ongoing interplay between the reference and description (this point has been fully explained in chapter II, section 1).

It will also be obvious in this connection that Wittgenstein's view of reference and truth is not in tune with that of Tarski, who is said to be neutral between the substantive or deflationary theory of reference. The entire strength of Tarski's model depends on the logical priority of reference and satisfaction, from which truth is deduced as a logically derivative concept. But for Wittgenstein, the so-called reference scheme itself fleshes out through certain primitive language-games, and these games in their turn expand bit by bit through descriptions—a part of which are the games with truth locutions. Thus this entire Tarskian programme of operating a logical machinery is dysfunctional in Wittgenstein's philosophy.

The issue of modality is a significant area where Wittgenstein's distance from the Bavean and deflationary programmes is worth noting. How would Wittgenstein handle the necessity of anaphoric propositions like 'If Jones is a student, he is a student,' and identity propositions like 'Jones is Jones' on the one hand, and the contingency of such reference

formulations like 'The one denoted by Jones is Jones,' or '"a" refers to a?' In the first place, unlike the deflationists as well as unlike Bave, Wittgenstein was never motivated to formulate the phenomenon of reference or truth under a neat analytic schema with an a priori status. His own views on necessity and a-priority cut an original pathway—different from the metaphysical, reductionist, and Bave's theories on the same. He neither endorses an ontological or substantive necessity in the Platonic, or Kantian, or even the Kripkean style, nor would he—like the empiricist—discard necessity in favour of disconnected bits supposedly given in experience. Evidently, Wittgenstein would not believe in the opposed categories of analytic a-priori necessity on the one hand and synthetic, a-posteriori contingency on the other. But the way he would flatten out this opposition would be far more innovative than suggested by Kripke, or the deflationist, or Bave's theories on reference. Wittgenstein had treated mathematical necessity as a transition of one kind of game to another, where the actual interaction between a number of physical items effecting a certain contingent output is frozen into the paradigm of mathematical identity. For instance, the causal interaction between two and two apples yielding four apples as a matter of fact is transformed into a paradigm of experiencing this interaction, not as a causal incident, but as an aspectual transition between two items of experience (see chapter II, section 1.2). Pressed with the purported necessity of '"S" is true iff S' or '"a" refers if at all to a,' Wittgenstein would invite us to look upon these truth schema or reference schema as an exercise of paradigm shift. It is an exercise of transforming, or rather freezing, the conventional and contingent associations of certain words with certain objects, or certain sentences with certain truth conditions into paradigms of reference or truth. The contingency of linguistic conventions, the variant opacities of propositional attitudes, the occasions of indexicalities are submerged under an aspectual transition between 'p' and '"p" is true,' 'a' and 'a' refers to a—in the same way as the contingent and vulnerable connexions, say, between two things

and two things on the one hand and four things on the other, are transformed into a necessary aspectual identity between two experiences. Thus, unlike Bave, Wittgenstein would not be under any pressure to transform '"a" refers to a if at all' to '"a" actually refers to a,' or formulate his reference schema in terms of fully interpreted propositions in order to overcome the problems of modality.

As for Bave's theory of reference, his principal achievement is perhaps to incorporate the speaker in the reference schema, which has been fatally overlooked in all the deflationary editions. However, there remains certain pronounced differences between him and Wittgenstein, which too are predictable from our previous chapters and section 3.6 mentioned above. Yet they are worth recounting, to keep our anti-foundationalist narration of Wittgenstein on the main track.

Firstly, Bave's account seems to undergo a tension between the dubious notion of Horwich's propositional constituent and his own admission of a disambiguated proposition that incorporates all contextual specificities. Further, Bave was not able to retain his notion of 'about' in his formula A (That S(t) is about t) as a more primary notion that gives a privileged entry into the notions of statement, language and reference, without presupposing all these. This promise seems to start failing as soon as we are obliged to bring in the richer notion of meaning—the literal versus the derivative meaning—to his treatment of such questions as whether the proposition 'The conservatives will win' is about conservatives or about politics. Of course, Bave started with the proposal that this was a question about the literal or derivative meaning of 'about', and does not incorporate the meaning of 't'. But soon he concedes that a question about the meaning of 'about' falls back on the question of the literal or derivative meaning of 't'.

Let us recall Bave's suggestion of expanding the deflationary reference schema by a pragmatic ellipsis to the formulation: 'that "e" is used by the relevant class of speakers to say *that e is …*'. This formulation does not cover certain varieties of

reference narrated by Wittgenstein, like ostensive teaching or learning of word meanings, a builder and assistant referring to the building materials, a person trained to blurt out specific noises corresponding to specific pigment cards.[32]

When it comes to Bave's 'about' formulations attaining more expressive power, Wittgenstein's mode of response is evident. 'I believe everything he says about Quine' does not contain, but fleshes out in and through, the individual instances that it is supposed to entail or scoop up in a neat capsule. So also with the claim of the statement *that I believe everything he said about Quine* being entailed by the statement *that I believe everything he said*. The expressive power of the 'about' locution is not the power of scooping up, or accumulating scattered granules in a condensed bundle by a special kind of mobility or a remote control mechanism.

Bave's treatment of propositional attitude leads us to wonder how exactly he would relate with Wittgenstein on this issue. For Wittgenstein, the difference between opaque and direct contexts is an internal one, based on a contrast between an internalist and externalist stance, or between a private and public game. The extensionalist or public game acknowledges a much larger range and variation of angles, viewpoints and perspectives, while the internalist or private games would confine themselves to specific viewpoints with less flexibility of orientations, within a restricted range of predicates. We can say that for Wittgenstein, the transparent contexts put up an externalist or extensionalist stance; they play the referring game of starting the ball rolling, i.e., to set off the movements of the pieces—the games of descriptions.[33] It is unclear whether Bave, in his claim of 'about' locutions behaving differently with respect to a *description* and a *name* (in the threefold communication between A, B and C noted in the previous section), can accommodate the Wittgensteinian

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[32] See chapter II, section 1.1 and also p. 187 for the last example.

[33] It must be noted that Wittgenstein also upholds a view on the private game of referring, which we have discussed extensively in chapter III, section 2.3.

insights about the real tension between transparent and opaque contexts.

A deflationary theory attempting to arrive at an ontological neutrality resembles a nominalist move of a word naming or collecting uses, generalising over a conjunction or disjunction of statements. With Wittgenstein's novel insight, we should learn to see the schema itself as an architectonic move to start off an indefinite and incomplete cluster of uses—it cannot name, collect or generalise a collection of finite or infinite number of uses. The deflationary theories of both truth and reference are content with bypassing the ontological overtones of these two issues; they think that their theories perform the valuable function of setting aside the substantial preoccupations with the ontology of truths, facts, events, correspondence, system of beliefs, or about the metaphysical status of the referent (whether it is simple or complex, pre-semantic or conceptual, a *necessary* identity or a variable item, etc.). But Wittgenstein has a stronger agenda—that of dissolving, and not merely sidetracking, unsolved metaphysical enigmas; he does not think that a philosopher will gain anything by shoving them outside the range of philosophical discourse along with a burgeoning extra-philosophical mass. He does not simply say that the ontological lumps have to be reduced to lived practices, but actually threshes them out through a gradually expanding narration. His philosophical works should not be taken as providing alternative schema of reference in the shape of a speaker saying *that S is about a*, or *that he uses such and such words to say so and so about a*. His works themselves are an ongoing flow of uses, and not nominalisation, predication, or statements *on* uses. 'Nominalists make the mistake of interpreting all words as *name*s and so of not really describing their use, but only so to speak, giving a paper-draft on such a descriptions' (*PI* 383). And these words obviously include 'truth', 'refer', 'about', 'words', 'name', 'proposition', 'statement', 'language', etc.

Just as the patent problems in the reference schema, viz., those pertaining to indexicality, homophonic expressions, foreign expressions, are in a sense trivial, so is Bave's suggestion

to recast them in terms of an expanded formulation through an exercise of pragmatic ellipsis. Just as the standard versions of deflationism sought to nominalise words, propositional constituents, etc., similarly Bave also sought to nominalise, if not the sentence or the proposition, at least the phenomenon of usage—the phenomenon of the user using the expression in a sentence which is *about* the referent—in a condensed schema, and takes this schema to replace the vast ongoing expanse of these language-games played out in real time. Bave seems to concede the validity of the deflationary programme of neutralising any substantive (including relativistic) input into the ontological nature of reference or truth. He admits that the deflationist can very well maintain the following type of equivalence: 'Our truth claims are shaped by our culture, history and forms of life' if and only if 'Our truth claims are shaped by our culture, history and forms of life' is true. Now for Wittgenstein, such a reformulation cannot be trivial or innocuous, for it ironically assumes an absolutist scheme of relativisation, based on the putative transparency of the relativisor and the relativised. To repeat, the minimal semantic and syntactic identity that is necessary for nominalising a sentence or a proposition has an aesthetic or architectonic (not formal logical) status, and it is questionable whether the deflationist or the Bavean style of thinking is equipped with this appreciation. In point of fact, such relativisation schemes on truth or reference flesh out in a flow of language-games enmeshed in forms of life, that *enact* and not *nominalise* or *state* this phenomenon of relativisation.

Bave seems to invest all philosophical commitments about *de re* beliefs, or, generally speaking, the vital issue on the relation between language and reality, to a mental phenomenon, and thinks that it is here that the non-committal nature of the deflationary programme of reference lies. He says that even the *de re* beliefs that can be expressed as 'b is such that a believes that … it …', or '($\exists$x) x = b & a believes that … x …'—i.e., without 'about' locutions—can be recast in the format of 'about' locution; but then these locutions do not touch reality, but simply

claim to gather an infinitely long array of sentences. Bave ends with the observation: '[T]he deflationary theory of reference does not confine us to deflationary answers, or to a Tractarean silence, on all questions concerning how we relate, mentally and linguistically, to the external world.'[34] Now such commitments and observations on the part of Bave evidently erupt in some vital discords with Wittgenstein's approach. Saying that the crucial connection between language and reality is mental, or lies in *de re* beliefs, is of no avail to Wittgenstein. It is not clear whether Bave's take on *de re* beliefs accommodates the vital exercise of extending private games into public games, and overall spreading out all mental capsules (images, intentions, etc.) into a thick blend of linguistic and non-linguistic behaviours that is ever indeterminate and ever incomplete. If Bave's proposal does not appreciate the internal rupture of all foundations of reference, then his theory of a *mental* reference, whether schematised or unschematised, or his substitution of 'denotation' for 'reference', will not serve any significant philosophical purpose.

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I have exhausted myself in this long and tortuous narrative, with no excess resources to construct a ceremonial exit gate. I have tried to give an honest exposition of the later Wittgenstein's approach to reference, in parallel addressing some other standard theories as well. I have sought to highlight some tantalising tracks of similarities that may seem to obtain between Wittgenstein's approach and certain other models of reference—only to work out ultimately their irreducible differences. There is a vast corpus of literature on the later Wittgenstein, though not too much on the specific topic of reference. This work can make a significant addition to the already existing literature only in so far as it can motivate one to go on describing the landscape in real time, and not to build bridges, to pull apart all seeming lumps, knots and joints of space into a flat stretch of activities—to go on blending the external with the internal, reference with description, activity with passivity, the public with the private.

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[34] Bave, 'A Deflationary Theory of Reference', p. 73.

Strawson and Wittgenstein on Reference and Presupposition— A Revisitation

1. Strawson Fine-Tunes His Theory of Reference, Identification and Presuppositions

Strawson argues that as we arrange the world in terms of universals and particulars, material bodies, shadows, important historical events, etc., figure as obvious candidates for the status of particulars, whereas colours and numbers do not.[1] Strawson says that there are in general two types of particulars, basic and non-basic—the first kind being ontologically prior to the second. Strawson goes on to define the notion of demonstrative definition or a successful ostensive definition: an expression, when given the setting and accompaniments of its use and the same space-time framework, can properly and naturally be taken to apply only to a certain single member of the range or type of particulars, and to nothing outside its range. Further, the hearer of this expression is able to discriminate it sensibly from all other things. So interestingly, all the inherent lacunae and indeterminacies of ostensive definition as pointed out by Wittgenstein (and presented in the second chapter)—viz., the opacity of the ostended object or the act of ostension or even the broad grammatical type that the ostended object belongs to, the wide backdrop of uses before the ostensive definition can set

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[1] See Strawson, *Individuals*, chapters I and VI.

in, and lastly the quantitative ruptures of the object—are sought to be ruled out by the positive foundations provided in the common conceptual scheme and space-time coordinates that we share with other users. It is as if all objects, with their qualitative and quantitative boundaries, are already present in our shared scheme of thoughts, sealing the possibility of all ruptures and disseminations. Thus, when one is tasked with picking from a group of particulars (say the 12th man from the left in the 15th row at the top), there can be no question as to which scene we are talking about. There can at most be a question as to which *part* of the scene we are talking about. Such an assurance seems to fall back heavily on a space-time containment model.

Strawson acknowledges the familiar philosophical anxiety that any mode of non-demonstrative identification using definite descriptions will not work, because the definite description itself is multiply satisfiable, and may apply to another sector of the universe. This is exactly the problem raised by Kripke and Putnam, who state that the connecting bridge between the word and the referent may be exactly replicated, and yet the user may be actually connected with another destination, i.e., another referent. While for Kripke and Putnam, it is the actual reality that causes the referent to connect the word with itself, either directly or through intermediary links in the causal chain, what Strawson requires is that both the speaker and the hearer should know of *a* particular which the description fits, and both should have conclusive reason to suppose that the other knows only of *one* such particular. Strawson himself is aware that such an answer is inadequate for various loopholes in the concept of knowing. But he assures us that since non-demonstrative identification falls back ultimately on demonstrative ones, the particular sector intended by the speaker has ultimately to be related uniquely to the sector that both the speaker and the hearer occupy. Strawson claims that the ultimate demonstrative identification actually requires that all particulars be situated in a unique system of space-time relations, in which every particular has to be uniquely related to the other. If we cannot locate the referent somehow

along a common spatio-temporal axis, even in a hitherto unmapped region, there is no demonstrative identification. Strawson says that by demonstrative identification, we can determine a common reference point and a common axis of spatial direction; and hereby we have the *theoretical* possibility (along with practical inability due to epistemological gaps) of referring to every other particular in space and time uniquely related to our reference point.

Apart from the question of whether this puts Strawson on an equal footing with Kripke and Putnam, we have the more compelling issue that needs to be reiterated: to ensure a unique space-time axis enabling us to situate all particulars in that scheme, and to enable all non-demonstrative identifications to be uniquely related with demonstrative identifications, is again to labour under an immaculate but empty scaffold ready to take in the concrete, full-bodied particulars or referents as its content, enabling us to relate them along a unique line. Besides, Strawson's assurance that the possibility of reduplication is only a *theoretical* possibility which we do not always confront in our practical operations shows him to be significantly distanced from the Wittgensteinian insights. It is not merely the theoretical possibility of the same definite descriptions (in non-demonstrative identification) leading to a *different* referent (Putnam), or that of the definite descriptions being replaced by different descriptions with different semantic content and yet leading on to the *same* referent (Kripke).[2] What worries Wittgenstein is the *fact* and not the mere *possibility* of both non-demonstrative and demonstrative identifications being inherently indeterminate, and thus being incapable of *carving* out (and not merely reaching out to) a referent, unless all are blended into a flow of linguistic and non-linguistic practices. The proposed theoretical solutions of stopping all reduplications

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[2] Putnam and Kripke held these views respectively in Hilary Putnam, 'Meaning and Reference', in A. P. Martinich (ed.), *Philosophy of Language* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); and Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*.

by putting the intended referent in a common system of spatio-temporal relations is a way of *acting*, and not trailing behind a pre-descriptional and pre-actional scaffolding—the bare space-time outlines.

Strawson further says that the system of spatio-temporal relations has a peculiar comprehensiveness and pervasiveness which qualifies it uniquely to serve as a framework in which we can organise our individuating thoughts about particulars. He adds that though we can freely add heterogeneous relations in framing identifying descriptions, the system of spatio-temporal relations remains the groundwork of these additions. It is *we* who build a single unified structure in which we *ourselves* provide a point of reference, enabling us both to single out the network and the individuals situated therein. Now, in order that this model of our building the structure does not fall back on empty space-time containers, Wittgenstein would add that we *enact* space-time in terms of referents and their interrelations where the language and actions are synthesised in a seamless whole.

For Strawson, the theory that particular-identification depends on the possibility of placing particulars in a single space-time system rests ultimately on the fact that certain classes of particulars are basic. And here Strawson correctly points out, in tune with Wittgenstein, that the space-time framework of four dimensions is not something extraneous to the objects; rather, it is the material three-dimensional objects enduring through time that make possible the frame of space-time itself. The material bodies have impenetrable neat boundaries and they have sustainable uniform features that persist through gradual change of the diverse qualities, which makes it possible to add the fourth dimension of time. So Strawson argues that the material bodies which constitute the framework of space-time must be the basic particulars—they supply our physical geography, or lend themselves to being placed within a spatio-temporal outline through a logically and temporally posterior exercise of abstraction. But Wittgenstein would argue that there

are no enduring properties of size, colour and shape which we can represent in an abstract scheme; rather, their endurance is projected against the shifting qualities which in their turn are enacted through a complicated pattern of activities.

Strawson takes the much-favoured and standardised track of insisting that however novel and deviant be the modes of conceiving an object, all these possible differences are grafted onto a spatio-temporal identity. And here Wittgenstein's way of problematising the notion of linear space, where smaller areas can be seen to be made of larger spaces and larger spaces are seen as divided into smaller spaces, becomes relevant. (These remarks appear principally in *PI* sections 47 and 48, and are discussed at length in the second chapter.) We can extend Wittgenstein's mode of argument to work against Strawson's: we can insist that the identification of different facets or qualities does not fall back on given chunks of material bodies with relatively enduring boundaries, but that this relative endurance of the qualities falls back upon their supposed givenness or transparency. When the intensity, duration and protensity dissipate in various directions, the project of pushing this excess back to a frozen boundary is not grounded upon an external reality, nor is it a representational abstraction, but is a matter of enaction.

Strawson himself suggests that his theory of basic particulars may face a challenge from the alternative category of four-dimensional objects, called 'process-things', each of whose temporally succeeding parts is three-dimensional. For instance, the erosion of a cliff has as much durability as the cliff itself, and maintains a constant spatial relation to the erosion of the next cliff. Now this category must be understood to be different from either that of 'process' or 'thing'; it is not to be identified with processes that a thing undergoes, nor with the things that undergo them. But Strawson argues that the category of process-things is rather suspect, because we identify processes as determined by things; we do not identify things as determined by processes. And here Strawson's argument is explicitly phrased in space-time containment paradigm, for he says that it is things

themselves that are 'the occupiers of space', having spatial position and spatial dimension. To give the spatial dimension of a process, say a death or a battle, one has to trace the outline of a dying man, or that of the battleground.[3] But let us note again that this alternative category of a process-thing—whether acknowledged or not by Strawson—is embedded in the mutual equation of the process and the thing. The process and the thing are both placed within the same semantic interpretation to form a correlative concept, i.e., philosophers who undertake the revolutionary and revelatory exercise of dissecting the material chunks into atomic facts or processes actually labour under the given transparency of the object that lends itself to the dissective operation. The new category of this process-thing is also embedded in this mutually compensatory scheme, and thus conveniently designed to fall back on the material bodies with a given boundary. One just needs to think of the different modes of identifying the process of dying that thicken out against a more expansive backdrop of other men and nature into a new dimension of space-time. The acclaimed spatio-temporal identity of the body and the properties or processes that the body undergoes are not given in a way that one determines the other. Nor do the linguistic categories we use—viz., things, processes, particulars, universals, substances, space, time—foreshadow a unique structure of our perception, cognition and description. The putative generality of our linguistic categories are fleshed out through a blend of linguistic and non-linguistic usages, in which the world itself—space-time locations, bodies, processes, properties and persons—are created and recreated in multiple varieties and fashions.[4]

Strawson also knows that he has to polish his notion of presupposition—a notion crucial for his theory of reference—to avoid the obvious charges of circularity and regression. Indeed, when Strawson explains reference in terms of *presupposing* the

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[3] Strawson, *Individuals*, p. 57.

[4] So far, I have relied on chapter I of Strawson, *Individuals*.

existence of a unique object answering a unique description, reference is built into this purported explanation; and in so far as the presupposed proposition is a *proposition* that can be true/false, it has to presuppose another proposition stating the existence of a unique particular answering that description, leading to a patently regressive process. Strawson does not take the easy way of simply sweeping aside the presupposition rule with respect to existential propositions with singular terms in the grammatical subject-position as he does with the class- and property-expressions. Rather, he seeks to nullify these possible charges by bringing in a subtle split within the notion of presupposition itself. He characterises them by the use of subscripts—presupposition$_1$ and presupposition$_2$—and demarcates them in the following manner. While the subject–predicate statement that Rajiv is a student presupposes$_1$ a statement as to the existence of a unique individual called Rajiv, this presupposed statement further presupposes$_2$ another statement about Rajiv. While both statements introduce a particular (here Rajiv), presupposition$_1$ introduces them into *propositions* and presupposition$_2$ introduces them into *discourse*.[5] That is to say, the introduction of particulars in the second sense would be the custom of introducing them in the first sense. Presupposition$_1$ is the condition of successful introduction of a certain particular, and hence condition of the first statement (i.e., the original presupposing statement) being true/false. On the other hand, what is required for presupposition$_2$ is the existence of certain facts that are conditions for introducing certain *kinds* of particulars, i.e., they are conditions of there being *any proposition at all* into which certain kinds of those particulars are introduced. And presupposition$_2$ introduces them in a way that excludes quantification over particulars of that class, i.e., it involves no sortal universals of which these individuals are instances. We need to clarify this point at some length.

There is indeed an asymmetry between universals and particulars as regards the presupposition rule, in so far as

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[5]   Ibid., chapter VI, pp. 198ff.

presuppositions for introducing particulars should involve no universals for the simple reason that universals are *explicitly* predicated of the particulars and not presupposed. But on second thoughts, these presuppositions of the former kind too involve a different *kind* of universals—not universals characterising the particulars that are introduced, but as characterising a different kind of particulars; for without this minimal presupposition the universals (say of being a student) could not have been predicated of the introduced particular (Rajiv in the present case) at all. But here arises a rather harsh requirement for presupposition$_2$, in so far as this presupposition should ultimately pertain to facts that contain no universals at all. The ultimate presupposition should not contain any universals that are either *sortal* or *characterising*, i.e., neither characterising the introduced particular nor any other kinds of particulars. And yet presupposition$_2$ must ultimately serve as the basis for introducing the basic particulars (material bodies) where all referential identifications terminate.

Now Strawson goes on to argue that there is indeed such a kind of universal, called *feature-universals* or *feature-concepts*, and these are introduced in statements which may conveniently be called *feature-placing statements*. For examples, Strawson suggests statements like 'It is raining,' 'It is snowing,' 'There is coal here,' 'There is water here,' etc. Strawson invites us to appreciate the point that snow, water, rain are general kinds of stuff; they do not embody the conceptual complication involved in universals of the *sortal* or *characterising* category—i.e., they do not embody the conceptual complication involved in either *characterising* particulars or *enumerating*, *distinguishing* or *re-identifying* particulars of any sort. On the other hand, '*being made of snow*', '*being made of gold*', introduce characterising universals and '*veins of gold*', '*litres of water*' introduce sortal universals. The feature-placing statements neither contain any part that introduces a particular, nor are any of their expressions used in a way that presupposes a use of expressions to introduce particulars. And yet these expressions are required to provide the basis for such statements that introduce particulars.

Here Strawson points out a predictable problem: while one may reasonably claim a smooth transition from these feature-concepts, say water or gold, to particulars like pools of water, lumps of gold, and also secure a method of enumerating and re-identifying these particulars, there are no feature-concepts that would serve as the basis for introducing particulars like cats or men, along with a procedure of enumerating or re-identifying them. This is for the simple reason that there are no cat-features or man-features that can be introduced as inchoate, homogenised lumps in the feature-placing statements, yet from which one can derive the individual men by cutting this lump into pieces, so to speak. So if the cat-universal has to be placed in feature-statements figuring as the ultimate presupposition$_2$ of reference, then these feature-statements should already involve the criteria for distinguishing and re-identifying cats as particulars, viz., the sortal universal. But these sortal universals are *ex hypothesi* ruled out from the notion of these ultimate feature-concepts. Strawson points out that even introducing a different notion of sortal universal, say, the notion of cat-slices, would not provide us a way of distinguishing and re-identifying particular cats. Neither the quantitative nor the qualitative criteria of these cat-slices is clear, i.e., we do not know what the temporal limits of these cat-slices are, nor do we have a clear idea as to whether the changes in the cat's attitudes or positions are to constitute the criterion for enumerating and re-identifying the cat-slices. Hence we cannot reap any profit from proposing these newly contrived feature-concepts to figure in the ultimate presuppositions of reference.

Strawson however is confident that such problems do not seriously impede his proposed theory of reference. He states that we do not have to find feature-placing propositions corresponding to every kind of basic particular we speak of: if we can do so only for very broad categories, that is enough for our purpose. So Strawson sticks to his suggestion that it is the feature-placing propositions that demonstratively indicate the incidence of general features which are not yet sortal universals,

that can effectively serve as the ultimate level of presupposition and thus of reference.

Strawson observes that the thought of a definite particular is complete in one sense, and incomplete in another. In so far as the particular (Rajiv) unfolds ultimately into the presupposed$_2$ fact involving the demonstrative placing of concept-features (which are not sortal or characterising universals), the thought of the particular is a complete thought. But when we make the reverse movement of folding the thought of the complete presupposed fact into the thought of the particular itself, then we are thinking of it (the particular) as the constituent of a further fact—Rajiv having a predicate or being related in some way to other particulars.[6] Strawson goes to the extent of claiming that the ultimate facts that do not contain any particulars but provide the basis for the conceptual transition to particulars can be said to be atomic facts. At this ultimate level of feature-placing facts where there is no particular, and only an incomplete universal (that is incomplete for thought), the antithesis of subject–predicate disappears. The two introduced terms—the subject and the predicate—merge in a non-relational tie to constitute a complete thought.[7]

2. Wittgenstein's Referring Games and Strawson's Ultimate Feature-Placing Propositions

One can open up interesting lines of analogies and disanalogies between Wittgenstein's referring games and Strawson's foundational propositions that demonstratively 'place' feature-concepts. Wittgenstein's examples of referring games too consist in posing demonstratively certain objects with a non-relational and isolated status as the starting point of a discourse, where the subsequent exercises of laying out these initial points as being enumerable and re-identifiable, or as being configurable with other particulars or repeatable features, have not yet begun. But

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[6] Ibid., p. 211.

[7] Ibid., p. 212.

here are some points on which Wittgenstein would stand apart from Strawson:

(a) Wittgenstein would say referring or naming is like putting pieces on a board, and so far as it does not involve the notion of developing into subsequent moves of the game, it cannot be accorded the status of a *complete fact* of placing features demonstratively as Strawson would like to have it. To take the other examples of referring games, the acts of bringing building materials according to the call of the builder, playing memory-games, the games of ostensive teaching and learning of the meanings of words, calling up images corresponding to uttered words, and even the action of a person ordered to produce different noises answering to different patches of colours, already break forth from the putative non-relational status (of the so-called feature-concepts) and spread out into a pervasive stretch of actions. (A full account of the referring games is presented in chapter II.) In this stretch, no action is separately identifiable as a complete fact that is bereft of any conceptual complication, and yet is able to serve as a magical and magnetic device to pull up the particular into its otherwise unarticulated and atomic mass and stretch out into a configuration of universals and particulars.

(b) Strawson seeks to invest his feature-concepts with both a non-conceptual and conceptual status, so that they can both serve as foundations external to and independent of the founded, i.e., the particulars, and yet somehow generate these particulars from their hidden reserve. That is why he says that criteria of distinctness may be present at the ultimate level of feature-placing, so far as one also places features such as 'There is snow here and here and here.' This reminds one of Wittgenstein's builder giving instructions such as 'D Slab there' and E Slab here', where 'D' and 'E' serve as numerals (*PI* 8). Wittgenstein's examples of referring games have provisions for introducing similar complications as well. Now whether the referring games or the feature-

placing propositions involve the exercise of counting or not, in so far as they involve recurrent features in different places and times, they *do* embody a conceptual split between a particular and universal (sortal and characterising) that Strawson desperately seeks to remove from this ultimate foundational stage of reference.

(c) For Strawson, the feature-placing facts serve as the foundation of the full-fledged subject–predicate statements about particulars, provided we have the criteria for identifying and re-identifying these particulars, and are also equipped with a range of characterising universals, or the range of possible facts that these (particulars) can be constituents of. Here we would like to make the Wittgensteinian intervention that referring games with the stance of either feature-concepts or non-descriptional particulars are architectonic or ceremonial moves, like adding an ornamental gateway on a building or a decorative title to a book, that give the false assurance of encapsulating all possible content within their fold. In point of fact, this referring game that we play is an aesthetic move ensconced in our forms of living; it has no independent body that hides the criteria of identifying particulars and the range of all possible combinations of the particulars. The referring games or the feature-placing propositions are only aestheticised generalities that are fleshed out bit by bit through each move of description.

(d) Strawson's theory of reference is an adventurous proposal with impossible combinations. He attempts to rake up the foundations of reference in the shape of feature-concepts that are placed in demonstrative activities, and yet these activities are given the status of propositions—propositions having no truth-value. Such a venture speaks of the desperation to splinter the single flow of a river into separate smaller fragments that will maintain their independent and isolated status, and yet will have the ability to break forth their boundaries and merge progressively with other fragments in a prescribed order.

(e) Strawson adds that the talk of introducing notions with
     progressively increasing levels of conceptual complications
     should not be taken as implying a temporal process, but
     rather as a conceptual development. This conceptual order
     of development is one where all arguments ultimately appear
     to *us*—the co-sharers of the same conceptual scheme—to be
     an intelligible and coherent ordering of its elements. Here all
     arguments end with an appeal to our understanding of what
     we *do*. We should note that here Strawson is tantalisingly
     close to Wittgenstein in acknowledging that all explanations
     end at some point. But while Strawson would like them to
     end at definite points, i.e., in the same conceptual scheme
     that we abstract in a similar fashion and with a similar
     understanding of what we do, Wittgenstein would have the
     explanations not end, but carry on forever in an ongoing
     flow of actions that themselves create and recreate our
     conceptual schemes.

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