

he thinks out of their ambit. Martian propositions are not propositions in the sense our laws assign to *proposition*, so not means by which the Martian might contravene those laws.

If we could ever say truly of a Martian that he expressed such-and-such a proposition, that would be a proposition on our understanding of what a proposition is; *a fortiori* the standard laws of logic would apply to it. There is no reason in principle why the Martian should not see himself as he does, and still, on occasion, count, by our lights, as expressing some given proposition of the sort *we* take thinkers to engage in. There is no reason why, for one purpose or another, he should not count as doing things that were subject to our standards. He would have to be subject to our standards to count as expressing, or thinking, any proposition we could take him to. That *might* limit severely our ability to count him as expressing, or thinking, specific propositions at all. (Or perhaps not. Much more needs to be said about what we do in attributing a thought to someone. On this see Travis 2000.)

An issue certainly remains. Suppose I purport to state a law of logic—in Frege's style if you insist, but, anyway, in some words which purport to say just what some law of logic would. I might say, 'No contradiction is true', or, to be more explicit, 'It is a law of logic that no contradiction is true.' Have I actually stated a law of logic in the first case, or actually said something to be a law of logic in the second? By the above line of thought I have stated something such that if it is so, then so is everything Frege expects from a law of logic. There is no explaining its being so, and so on. But as to whether I have thus stated truth, that now seems to depend on whether what I said the first time ought to count as a law of logic. That, in turn, it now seems, is in part a matter of what *we* are prepared to recognize as to when something would be correctly so treated; on our parochial perceptions as to when such treatment would be the right thing, all considered. That may look as if it makes it impossible for us ever so much as to state a law of logic, though we may say like-sounding things. It may also make it look impossible for us ever to say something to be a law of logic, and genuinely to be saying *that*. It would then be equally impossible for us ever to treat anything as a law of logic. For, the thought would be, a law of logic is not just what counts as such by some parochial standard or other, but what *really* does count *as such*. And we cannot so much as say something to do that.

There is a large issue here. The response to it will draw heavily on the *Investigations* view of nonsense, which, to adumbrate, is substantially different from the *Tractatus* view of that. Changing conceptions of the role of structure, as traced in this lecture, force correspondingly different understandings of what nonsense would be. That response will be a topic of Lecture 5. For the moment, I rest here.

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Determination

There is one discussion in *Investigations* (§§1–79) of naming a way for things to be, broken in two by an interpellation. The discussion of following a rule is, similarly, broken into two discussions separated by an interpellation. In the first case, the interpellation treats a specific problem about naming individuals. The suggestion is that it is a genuine, and hopeless, problem until the new view of naming in general is on board. That is why the discussion of naming ways for things to be ends, in §79, by returning to the specific problem about naming individuals. The most salient topic of the interpellation in the second case is views of logic, as discussed in Lecture 3. (There is also the crucial presentation of Wittgenstein's new view of answerability, in §§134–7.)

What is the point of the second interpellation? As I will read it, the following discussion is a response to a particular impression which the family resemblance discussion (among other things) might leave on a philosopher. The impression would be: Wittgenstein has provided an alternative to the Fregean picture of how it is determined what is said (of how a truth-condition is determined); a language *could* work in the Wittgensteinian way, perhaps our natural languages do; but one still *could*, in principle, speak in a way that fit the Fregean picture if, say, it suited one's scientific purposes. Wittgenstein has been suggesting all along that that is not so. (See, for example, §120.) The rule-following discussion is an extended case that there is really no such thing as speaking in such a Fregean way; if it seems to us that there is, that is only because we do not really understand what we are thus committed to.

The second interpellation is to be directed at a certain idea about *meaning* (and understanding) words in some particular way. That idea can make Fregean talk seem possible—as it does today. (See, e.g., Fodor 1998, who explicitly takes it to support a 'Fregean architecture of [linguistic] meaning'.) §§138–9 begin with a problem for that idea. The idea is, roughly, that linguistic meaning is inherited from individuals meaning their communications in this or that way, where their so doing need not presuppose meaningful language. Meaning, or understanding, words in a Fregean way is seen as somehow unproblematic. Now, harmlessly, if we can mean, and understand, words in a Fregean way, then the words can bear Fregean understandings, and if not, not. But, truisitically, you can only mean words in ways there are for words to be meant. That truism now needs to be read through the lens of the work of the interpellation. In the *Grammar*, it is only in a language that there are things to be meant. In the *Investigations*, it is

only in a language *game* that there are things to be meant. What is right in that idea can help show why we can make no real sense of the Fregean conception of what it would, or might, be to say things. That will help show why Wittgenstein's initial discussion of language games, and then of family resemblance, is not *just* a description of one way language could be.

The second half of the rule-following discussion is directed at that goal. But what about the first half (§§84–7)? Its main morals are summarized in §85:

A rule stands there like a sign post. — Does the sign post leave no doubt open about the way I have to go? . . . And if there were not a single sign post, but a chain of adjacent ones, or chalk marks on the ground—is there only one way of interpreting them?—So I can say, the sign post does after all leave no room for doubt. Or rather: it sometimes leaves room for doubt, and sometimes not. And now this is no longer a philosophical proposition, but an empirical one.

A signpost admits of interpretations. On the highway's edge is a blue sign with an arrow pointing right, and the legend 'Colmar'. The blue indicates motorway. The arrow indicates that one turns right to get on it. But should I turn right immediately, plowing through a fence, and then a field? Or should I go on to the next little service road and then turn right? Should I turn right and then reverse direction? Or should I wait for one of those recognizable motorway entrances, veer onto it (no sharp turns), and carry on? What is the sign telling me to do? These are all ways someone *might* understand the sign. They are, in fact, all ways of understanding the instruction to turn right to get on the motorway. If a rule stands there like a signpost, then it, too, admits of interpretations. It is not just some *formulation* of the rule that admits of interpretations. Even Frege would expect that to be true (at least if the formulation is not in *Begriffsschrift*). It is the *rule*. The rule says to turn right to get onto a motorway. To say that *is* to identify the rule. Or if it is not, then some more elaborate statement of it is. There is something *identifiable* which the rule says to do. But then, identify it, and you will have identified something which admits of interpretations.

The second point of §85 is that all said so far may be, where it matters, entirely harmless. That there are such interpretations of the signpost need not bear at all on what the signpost says to do; precisely what I *do* when I veer onto the on-ramp and carry on. Whether the existence of another interpretation bears on that or not, all depends on further factors. Sometimes it does. Once, in the central station of Lyon, looking for my train, I encountered a sign, directly above my head, with the number of my track on it, and an arrow pointing directly at my feet. I was, I admit, stumped. Fortunately, a passing Frenchman was not stumped. The arrow pointing at the floor meant to take an escalator to the next floor up. Now the point is: if most Frenchmen were like me in this respect, then there would be a doubt as to what the arrow said; and then it might well be that it did not say (succeed in saying) to take the escalator up. Since, however, any train-riding

Frenchman would see instantly, unreflectively, what the sign meant, it in fact did say to take the escalator up. There really was not any doubt about it. I simply did not understand it. I do not understand Hungarian either. That hardly means that in Hungarian nothing is ever said.

§85 tells us that whether there is, or is not, doubt, in this sense, as to what a rule says is an empirical matter. The above example illustrates the point. It depends on the circumstances in which the rule is called upon to tell us something. So it is an occasion-sensitive affair. It also depends on the natural perceptions, responses, of those for whom the rule is to serve as a rule—the French, or so I concede, in the above case. This is to say: for a rule to count as saying to do *this* (identified by doing it) is for it to say that on a certain parochial understanding of it; to do so on given thinker's way of understanding it (on what *they* are prepared to recognize as the right way). There is no other thing it can be for a rule to say to do *this*.

The points so far are a general framework that will remain intact in the second part of the rule-following discussion. The problem will be to see how they apply to a case of someone's meaning something in such-and-such way. But there is also a highly significant contrast in Wittgenstein's way of putting things. Compare §87 (first discussion) and §198 (second):

As though an explanation, as it were, hung in the air unless supported by another one. Whereas an explanation may indeed rest on another one that has been given, but none stands in need of another—unless we require it to prevent a misunderstanding. (§87)

'But how can a rule show me what I have to do at this point? Whatever I do is, on some interpretation, in accord with the rule.'—That is not what we ought to say, but rather: any interpretation hangs in the air along with what it interprets, and cannot give it any support. (§198)

There is here a (I think) quite intentional use of the same image of hanging in the air. What saves these passages from contradicting each other is only that the first speaks of explanation (*Erklärung*) where the second speaks of interpretation (*Deutung*). §87 depicts it as a ludicrous idea that an explanation cannot explain (pending a further one), whereas §198 depicts it as an absolutely correct idea that an interpretation cannot transform a rule into something that does not admit of interpretations. That a rule *admits* of interpretations—that there are things one would count as understandings of *that* rule—and that an interpretation admits of interpretations, is just intrinsic to the case. There are no interpretation-proof rules. That certainly bears on the idea of Fregean language. To see how, we must work out what it is for rules to be intrinsically that way.

I mentioned, above, its somehow seeming unproblematic that one can *mean* (or understand) words to speak of something of the sort Frege would have words speak of. There is something that can make things seem this way. It is an illusion engendered by a misreading of a grammatical truism which can be put this way: my meaning such-and-such words in such-and-such way is not something that

admits of understandings. The illusion would be that that means: those words as I meant them do not admit of understandings. If it did, then my so meaning them might confer a Fregean understanding on them. The grammatical truism is (roughly) this. Suppose Pia said 'Sid does'. By way of telling you how she meant those words, I say, 'She meant (to say) that Sid grunts.' You might reply, 'But being a grunter is something that admits of understandings. On what understanding of being one did she mean this?' I might answer, 'One on which having the normal human capacity would make one a grunter', or 'One on which it would take rude habits to make one one', or even 'Well, Pia just didn't think of that. She meant it on no such particular understanding.'

What I cannot say (correctly), though, are things like this: 'She meant that Sid was a grunter on that first understanding if you understand (one understands) the way she meant her words in one way; she meant it on that second understanding if you understand the way she meant her words in another.' Nor can I say, e.g., 'She meant it on the first understanding if that is how we (or her peers, or whoever else) would naturally understand being a grunter (in the circumstances in which she spoke).' Precisely not. How Pia meant her words, and how they would be understood are two very different matters. You (or one) cannot change how she meant her words by understanding that which she meant them to say (say, that Sid is a grunter) in one or another way.

Those are truisms about personal meaning (someone's meaning words in a certain way). What they do not mean is that if Pia meant (her words) to say that things were thus and so, then things being *that way* does not admit of understandings. If what Pia meant is that Sid grunts on such-and-such understanding of being a grunter, Sid grunting, so understood, may be a phenomenon that admits of understandings (as to when it would occur), even if someone else's having one or another such understanding cannot change what Pia meant, nor does their existence mean that she meant one thing on one understanding of that phenomenon of which she meant to speak, another on another. These last things are all nonsense. Which does not mean that there is some way Pia meant her words to say Sid to be such that Sid's being that way does not admit of understandings.

There is a parallel here between personal meaning and factive meaning. If pigs mouthing straws means that it will rain, that is on a particular understanding of pigs mouthing straws. To locate that understanding, you must find out just what porcine behaviour impending rain in fact engenders. If there are various understandings of pigs having straws in their mouths on the understanding thus located, that does not mean that if you understand the relevant phenomenon in some one of these ways, then it is on *that* understanding that straws in their mouths means rain. What does the meaning is not relative to some understanding of that which does the meaning. Nor would it change what in fact means rain if it came naturally to everyone to understand things being that way in some one particular way. But none of this means that if it is things being

such-and-such way that means that it will rain, there cannot be various admissible understandings as to what it would, or might, be for things to be *that way*.

So one can be seduced into illegitimate thoughts as to what personal meaning ought to be able to do. It still remains to show what is wrong with the idea that one can mean one's words to do what Fregean language needs them to.

1. THE ABYSS

An explanation *can* explain. In §84 Wittgenstein tells us part of what makes this possible:

But that is not to say that we are in doubt because it is possible for us to *imagine* a doubt. I can easily imagine someone always doubting before he opened his front door whether an abyss did not yawn behind it, and making sure about it before he went through the door (and he might on some occasion prove right)—but that does not make me doubt in the same case.

The parochial is very visibly at work here. We *can* make sense of the idea of there being an abyss outside my door now. We can imagine someone suspecting so. We can imagine there being one. But might there, now, be an abyss before my door? How should we understand that 'might'? There are conceivable ways for an abyss to have opened up, unnoticed by me. But suppose I want to leave. I do not suppose that any of these things might have happened. Ought I to? If you were to tell me that I might be unable to leave, because there might be an abyss before my door, should the mere existence of such ways for an abyss to open up count in favour of the truth of what you thus said? (If a government contractor or has in fact been going around placing abysses in the neighbourhood, that is, of course, another matter.) Wittgenstein's suggestion is that (depending on the circumstances) the answers to these questions might well be 'No.' So what you would have told me in so speaking would not be correct (or true).

But if, on an occasion, those are the correct answers, what would make them so? Not that there is, *tout court*, some sort of conceptual impossibility in an abyss before my door—that it is some sort of artefactual necessity that there is none. (One might reflect here on how very unreassuring an artefactual necessity would be—whatever is before my door, that is no abyss.) So the answer to these questions can be 'No' only if what might be (in such matters at least) is an occasion-sensitive affair. For if there is no conceptual impossibility in an abyss before my door, then there must be some occasions on which to say, correctly, that there might be. But with occasion-sensitivity comes work for parochial sensibilities. If the 'might' in your 'There might be an abyss before your door' is not to be understood so as to be made true by what is in fact so about conceivableities, that can only be because such an understanding would not correspond to the expectations it would be reasonable for thinkers like us to have of words which said such a thing in such circumstances. If you did not speak truth, that is because

of the way our parochial sensibilities contribute to fixing what it is that is to be true: what it is one here speaks of, is to be held responsible for, in speaking of what might be. (Bernard Williams saw this clearly, and was correspondingly leery of such supposed facts as to what might be. See Williams 1978: 67.)

If explanations actually explain, then this role for the parochial must also be present when it comes to that sign with the arrow to Colmar. Which is to say, by the idea of §85, that they must be present wherever a rule actually does say to do *this* (referring to what one then does). In the case of the sign, the point would look like this. Suppose I see the sign and drive off into the field immediately behind it. That is not what the sign said to do. Why not? Well, one would not expect the sign (a sign like that) to be telling one to do such a thing. Those expectations depend on quite a bit of background. For one thing, driving into a field would be a very foolish thing to do. The authors of such signs ought not to be expected to be in the business of making that sort of trouble. In fact, to one *au fait* with the institution, such authors ought to be expected to be directing motorists onto motorways. Again, to one as familiar with the institution as a motorist may be expected to be, driving into a field should not be expected to be the intended method of getting onto a motorway, and so on. So there are, first, those who ought to be expected to understand such signs, and there is, second, that which such thinkers might reasonably (ought to be expected to) expect. If what the sign says is decided by such considerations, then it did not say to drive into a field. Moreover, one can explain what it said, e.g., in this way: it said to take a soon-approaching on-ramp. Such an explanation, given in the right circumstances, would bear the right understanding.

Thus for signposts. Rules follow suit. Here is a rule posted on many doors in many buildings. It is announced this way: 'Fire door. Keep shut.' The rule thus announced is to keep that door shut. May I, then, pass through the doorway? There is an obvious understanding of keeping a door shut on which the answer is no. There is another on which the answer is yes. The second will seem overwhelmingly the reasonable one to anyone with any idea of what fire doors are for. So, by the same considerations that mattered for signposts, the rule in fact announced here is only reasonably taken to say what does not exclude my passing through the doorway. In fact, it would be absurd to take it otherwise.

If the parochial is acknowledged as actually deciding, in the way sketched, what a signpost says, or what a rule says to do—if what ought to be expected of obeying, or disobeying, a stated rule actually matters to what the rule says, in the indicated way—then rules may, in fact, say, and tell us, what to do. If we disallow this role for the parochial, then it is hard to see how a rule could so much as say what to do (where that means saying to do *this*). It is especially hard to see that if it is so that any rule admits of interpretations. Part of the point of Frege's view of language was precisely to disallow such roles for the parochial. So we must now move towards seeing what happens when such roles are (thoroughly) disallowed.

2. THE WAY WE WERE

It is time to look at personal meaning, specifically, meaning one's words to represent, in some specific way, things as being some specific way. To mean one's words in a given way is to have a certain understanding as to what it is they are to say. So what goes here for personal meaning will go for the understandings we have of our own words, or those of others, too.

Meaning one's words in a given way is something one does *as* one speaks them. But it is not without commitments for the future. If Pia meant to say that Sid grunted on an understanding on which that is a rude habit, and if Sid turns out to be the most urbane of the urbane, then the way Sid is is not the way Pia meant he was. That it is not is something fixed by what Pia meant when she spoke, still in ignorance of Sid's urbanity. These points are banalities. My concern will be with a particular expansion of them. It has three main points. First, if Pia meant her words in a particular way, then, for any different way there is of meaning words, there must have been something about Pia then which distinguishes her from how she would have been in meaning her words in that way. It cannot be *just* that she meant her words in the way she did and no other. It should be something which *makes* it so that she meant her words in *that* particular way. (It might be, e.g., a relation she bore to some structured internal state.) Second, whatever it is about Pia that then marked her as meaning her words in the way she did, that must be a way she could have been even if that which was, or was not, things being as she meant had been different than it is. If she meant that Sid grunts (bad habit), and he is the most urbane of men, she might still have meant *that*, so been what marked her as so meaning, even if he habitually grunted. And if he does have that annoying habit, she might still have been the relevant way even had he been urbane. Third, what does mark Pia (at time of speaking) as meaning what she does is something that can be made explicit: one would need no intuitive grasp of how it is she meant her words in order to grasp such an explicit account, and, with it, see what it was about Pia that made it so that she meant her words as she did.

The first point lets us trade in talk of *how* Pia meant her words for talk of *which way* she meant them. For it supposes that there is some identifiable set of distinctions between ways of meaning words which decide, *tout court*, when there are two such ways, when one; so which draw, once and for all, all the distinctions there are between one way of meaning words and others.

Here is an example to illustrate the second point. Pia is looking for her shoes. Sid sees them, heels protruding from beneath the bed. He says, 'Your shoes are under the bed.' He means to speak on an understanding of shoes being under the bed on which Pia's shoes so count, despite the heels. There is such an understanding. There are others. If Pia were trying to make sure that her shoes would not catch the eye of the kleptomaniacal Zoë, Sid would not have said that her shoes

