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The Origins of the Rule-Following Considerations and the Development of Wittgenstein's Philosophy in the 1930s[1]

Resumo

Em termos gerais, o paradoxo do seguir regras em Wittgenstein diz respeito à ideia de que uma regra pode ser interpretada diferentemente em cada caso da sua aplicação ou de que nenhum modo de agir poderia ser determinado por uma regra, porque todo modo de agir poderia ser tomado como estando em conformidade com a regra (Investigações Filosóficas, § 201). Abordo a melhor maneira de compreender este paradoxo por meio de uma avaliação crítica da exposição esclarecedora e explícita de Robert Fogelin, em seu recente livro, Taking Wittgenstein at his Word. Fogelin toma a formulação excepcionalmente clara e concisa do paradoxo, na Gramática Filosófica, § 9 como seu texto chave. Situando este texto no contexto das interpretações conflitantes dos escritos de Wittgenstein no início da década de 30, avalio os pontos fortes e as limitações da interpretação de Fogelin.

Palavras-chave: Wittgenstein . Fogelin . seguir regras . paradoxo da interpretação . Nachlass

Abstract

Roughly speaking, Wittgenstein's rule-following paradox concerns the idea that a rule can be variously interpreted in every case or that no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be brought into accord

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with the rule (Philosophical Investigations, *§201). I approach the question of how best to understand this paradox by means of a critical assessment of Robert Fogelin's insightful and explicit exposition in his recent book,* Taking Wittgenstein at his Word. *Fogelin takes Wittgenstein's unusually clear and concise statement of the paradox in Philosophical Grammar §9 as his key text. By placing that text in the context of competing interpretations of Wittgenstein's writing in the early 1930s, I evaluate the strengths and limitations of Fogelin's interpretation.*

Keywords: Wittgenstein . Fogelin . rule-following . paradox of interpretation . Wittgenstein's *Nachlass*

1. Introduction: Fogelin and the Paradox of Interpretation

What is the relationship between the treatment of rule-following in the *Philosophical Investigations* and the discussion of this topic in Wittgenstein's writing from the 1930s? More broadly, what is the relationship between Wittgenstein's initial formulation of his ideas in his manuscripts and typescripts and their final expression in his most polished work?

I approach these questions by means of a critical assessment of Robert Fogelin's insightful and explicit exposition of Wittgenstein's rule-following paradox, or paradox of interpretation, in his recent book, *Taking Wittgenstein at his Word*[2]. Roughly speaking, the paradox concerns the idea that "a rule can be variously interpreted in every case" or "that no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be brought into accord with the rule."[3] Fogelin opens the first chapter of his book by setting out this paradox:

Readers of *Philosophical Investigations* are familiar with the story of the child being taught to produce the series of even numbers starting with 2. She starts out well enough, writing down 2, 4, 6, 8. However, when asked to pick up the series at 1000, she writes down 1000, 1004, 1008, 1012 (*PI* 183). Told that she is no longer following the instructions we gave her – no longer doing the same thing – she replies that she is, perhaps saying, "Look,

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2 For some further discussion of Fogelin's book, see Stern 2012.

3 Wittgenstein *Philosophical Investigations, §201.*

see for yourself!" The rub is this: Whatever she writes down, there will be some interpretation of the instructions we gave her – indeed, endlessly many interpretations – such that she has acted in conformity with the rule, and endlessly many interpretations such that she has not. Hence, we arrive at what Wittgenstein calls a paradox:

> *PI* 201. This was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule. The answer was: if everything can be made out to accord with the rule, then it can also be made out to conflict with it. And so there would be neither accord nor conflict here.[4]

On Fogelin's reading, Wittgenstein's target

> is a certain account of rule-following that, he shows, leads to a paradox. We might call it the *interpretational* account. To fix this firmly in mind, from now on I will talk about Wittgenstein's *paradox of interpretation.* The paradox is this: If we hold that following a rule always involves acting in conformity with an interpretation, then whatever we do will count as both following the rule and not following the rule. Can't this matter be resolved by declaring what interpretation we are acting under? This will not help, for it simply reinstates the paradox of interpretation: Whatever we say about our intended interpretation will also admit of various interpretations. No interpretation can stop this regress; none has a built-in immunity to further interpretation. There are, we might say, no self- interpreting interpretations.[5]
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> What the paradox shows, he says, "is that there is a way of grasping a rule that is not an interpretation." Surprisingly – actually, incredibly – Kripke never cites this passage in *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* and thus misses what I take to be the central moral of Wittgenstein's paradox: Rule-following cannot be made determinate

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4 Fogelin 2009, 15-16. In this passage, and the ones that follow from the opening of Fogelin's book, I have omitted his footnotes, which are not directly relevant to the main line of interpretation that I wish to focus on here. His quotations from the *Philosophical Investigations* make use of Anscombe's translation in the third edition of that book, published in 2001.

5 Fogelin 2009, 18-19.

– or, by extension, meanings cannot be fixed – through interpretation alone.[6]

If someone does not act appropriately when instructions are expressed one way, it may help to express them differently. Wittgenstein is not opposed to interpretations understood this way. What he does oppose is the claim (or assumption, or inclination to think) that every meaningful application of a term involves an act of interpretation.[7]

...Wittgenstein does not hold that the paradox of rule-following is unavoidably thrust upon us as something we will have to learn to live with. To put the matter more strongly, for Wittgenstein there is no "paradox" of rule-following. The thought that it is paradoxical is the product of a misconception, namely, the misconception that rule-following is always grounded in (or implicitly contains) acts of interpretation.[8]

Fogelin takes Wittgenstein's unusually clear and concise statement of the paradox in *Philosophical Grammar* §9 as his key text. In doing so, he does precisely what what we expect of an interpretation of Wittgenstein on rule-following: he rephrases "Wittgenstein's thought in a more conventional manner." Yet he does so in a deliberately minimal way, "taking Wittgenstein at his word", with the aim of respecting Wittgenstein's "claims that his aim is purely therapeutic and that he is not in the business of presenting and defending philosophical theses."[9] By placing that text in a broader context, I evaluate the strengths and limitations of Fogelin's interpretation, and the question of the relationship between Wittgenstein's literary style and philosophical methods.

Section 9 of the *Philosophical Grammar*, then, runs as follows:

9 [a][10] Suppose the order to square a series of numbers is written in the form of a table, thus:

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6 Fogelin 2009, 17. The quoted passage is from the second paragraph of *Philosophical Investigations* §201, which Fogelin has quoted in full a few lines earlier.

7 Fogelin 2009, 19.

8 Fogelin 2009, 22.

9 Fogelin 2009, xi.

10 Sources: MS 140, pp. 9-10. MS 114, pp. 17-18 & pp. 128-9. *Big Typescript*, §4, pp. 14-15. MS 109, p. 278, 29 January 1931.

x	1	2	3
x^2			

– It seems to us as if by understanding the order we add something to it, something that fills the gap between command and execution. So that if someone said "You understand it, don't you, so it is not incomplete" we could reply "Yes, I understand it, but only because I add something to it, namely the interpretation." – But what makes you give just *this* interpretation? Is it the order? In that case it was already unambiguous, since it demanded this interpretation. Or did you attach the interpretation arbitrarily? In that case what you understood was not the command, but only what you made of it.

[b][11] (While thinking philosophically we see problems in places where there are none. It is for philosophy to show that there are no problems.)

[c][12] But an interpretation is something that is given in signs. It is *this* interpretation as opposed to a different one (running differently). So if one were to say "Any sentence still stands in need of an interpretation" that would mean: no sentence can be understood without a rider.

[d][13] Of course sometimes I do *interpret* signs, give signs an interpretation; but that does not happen every time I understand a sign. (If someone asks me "What time is it?" there is no inner process of laborious interpretation; I simply react to what I see and hear. If someone whips out a knife at me, I do not say "I interpret that as a threat".)[14]

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11 Sources: MS 140, p. 10. MS 114, p. 18 (where it occurs after [d]).

12 Sources: MS 140, p. 10. MS 114, p. 18. *Big Typescript*, §4, p. 15. MS 110, p. 267, 2 July 1931. See also *Zettel*, §229.

13 Sources: MS 140, p. 10. MS 114, p. 18. *Big* Typescript, §5, p. 16. MS 110, pp. 109-110, 15 February 1931.

14 Wittgenstein 1974, §9; I have added the letters in parentheses at the beginning of each paragraph as a convenient reference device.

Fogelin regards this passage as exemplary because it sets out, in just a few short paragraphs, the central theme of his reading of Wittgenstein's later philosophy: the rejection of an interpretational account of rule-following, and its replacement with what he calls a "defactoist" account. The interpretational account is sketched in the first three sentences of the first paragraph: to understand an order, or any other sentence, one must add an interpretation to it. The sounds we produce when we speak, or the marks we make on the page when we write, are always potentially ambiguous, an ambiguity that can only be resolved by an interpretation. Of course, this notion of "interpretation" is itself open to interpretation, and Wittgenstein will later argue in much greater detail that we are unable to formulate any such conception in a way that will do the work we ask of it. He begins to indicate these problems in the second half of the first and third paragraphs. If the interpretation is already demanded by the words in question, or the person who produced them, then those words are not really ambiguous; but if the hearer adds it, it is hard to see how we can avoid the conclusion that we make up the meaning, rather than find out what it is. Even worse, whatever interpretation we may come up with will itself be expressed in words, words which are themselves open to yet another level of interpretation. However, Fogelin's principal reason for taking this passage as his point of departure is the intimation, in the final paragraph, of the defactoist approach to rule-following he attributes to Wittgenstein. Fogelin does not define the term; the closest he comes to a summary of what he has in mind is to say that it involves "the rejection of appeals to rational processes where philosophers typically have attempted to find or supply them,"[15] and interpretationalism is his leading example of such an appeal. However, he does identify a number of characteristic features of Wittgenstein's defactoism. One is the central role he gives to natural responses and training in his account of rule-following, and in particular, the point that the kind of training a creature can undergo depends on its natural or instinctive responses. Another is his "rejection of the idea that training is merely an *external* device intended to induce in the trainee a grasp of the correctness, the legitimacy, of what he has been trained to do."[16] However, on the surface, the point made in paragraph [d] is a much more modest one: namely, that there are cases where we understand signs without interpreting them.

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15 Fogelin 2009, 41.

16 Fogelin 2009, 35-36.

Before we can turn our attention to this passage and the interpretive ques-
tions it raises, we need to consider the broader question of the relationship
between what Wittgenstein wrote – his *Nachlass* – and the material that has
been published under his name.

2. Interpretations of Wittgenstein's *Nachlass*

Wittgenstein's *Nachlass* consists of over 20,000 pages of manuscripts and
typescripts. Because he published barely 25,000 words of philosophical writ-
ing during his lifetime – the *Tractatus* (1922) and a very short conference pa-
per – the papers that he left unpublished have played an unusually large role
in the reception of his work. The books published after his death, almost all
of them based on materials in his *Nachlass*, contain well over a million words.
As the *Nachlass* contains approximately three million words, one could say
that roughly a third of Wittgenstein's writing is in print. However, as much of
the remaining material consists of drafts, rearrangements, and other versions
of the previously published material, one could argue that considerably more
than a third of his *Nachlass* has already been published. On the other hand,
because Wittgenstein never copy-edited any of these papers for publication,
each of the books based on them called for substantial editorial decisions, and
so one could argue that very little of the *Nachlass* has been available in print.[17]

In view of this history, the Bergen electronic edition of Wittgenstein's
Nachlass, published in 2000, is particularly valuable for the access that it
provides to the Wittgenstein papers as a whole. Research on Wittgenstein's
Nachlass has flourished in recent years. Crucially, the Bergen Archives have
not only developed and disseminated a variety of digital editions of Wittgen-
stein's papers, but have also enabled a steady stream of researchers to visit the
archive and create an informal international network of Wittgenstein *Nachlass*
researchers. There is "a vibrant research community dedicated to the expo-

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17 For previous discussion, see Hintikka 1991; Hrachovec 2000, 2002, 2005; Huitfeldt 1994,
1994a; Kenny 1976, 2005; McEwen 2005; McGuinness 2002a; Paul 2007; Pichler 2002, 2006;
Schulte 2002; Stern 1994, 1996, 1996a, 2008; 2010b. The Bergen edition can also be used to
review the editing of the published works. While this information is not provided within the
digital edition, Biggs and Pichler 1993 provide detailed charts of the Nachlass sources of the
published works. The discussion of my earlier work on this material and of the reception of
scholarly digital editions is based on an earlier version in Stern 2008.

sition and criticism of Wittgenstein's work, including the vast *Nachlass*."[18] Despite this, the impact of this "digital turn" on Wittgenstein scholarship has not been as large as early reviewers hoped – or feared.

Even among those enthusiastic about the ultimate value of work on the Wittgenstein papers, there is considerable scepticism about the philosophical results that have been achieved. For instance, according to Savickey "no manuscript material has significantly altered the reading or interpretation of Wittgenstein's later philosophy."[19] This claim, however, is demonstrably false: we need look no further than the volumes that make up the first edition of the Baker & Hacker commentary, undeniably one of the most influential contributions to the interpretation of Wittgenstein's philosophy.[20] Their close reading of the sources of the remarks in the *Philosophical Investigations* makes essential use of the *Nachlass*, and has had an enormous impact. It set a new standard for a thorough and systematic reading of the *Philosophical Investigations*, and effectively laid to rest the once widely held view that it cannot be read as a sustained series of arguments.[21] As Hacker puts it, the *Nachlass* is "an indispensable tool for the interpretation of [Wittgenstein's] thought. For there one can find the dozens of pages of struggle that lead up to, and shed light on, the one or two sentences constituting the remark that is the final expression of his thought on the matter."[22] However, the precise nature of the relationship between the "struggle" in the *Nachlass* sources and the "final expression" has become one of the principal topics of debate among *Nachlass* interpreters.

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18 Martin 2008, p. 1. For instance, between January 2002 and August 2004, 32 research projects, involving over a thousand days of on-site research, were carried out at the Bergen Wittgenstein Archives, addressing issues in Wittgenstein studies, philosophy, scholarly electronic publishing and text encoding. For details, see http://wab.aksis.uib.no/wab_eu-ari-wab.page . There has been a great deal of work on the Nachlass materials, much of it not yet published, or only available in the form of theses and dissertations.

19 Savickey 1998, 348, n. 50.

20 Baker and Hacker, 1980, 1980a, 1985; Hacker 1990, 1996.

21 Hacker is at work on a revised edition of his Commentary that makes use of the electronic edition of the Bergen Electronic Edition, but the changes from the first edition are, for the most part, quite minor. In a recent paper on "the interpretative relevance of Wittgenstein's Nachlass" (2010) he maintains that the Bergen Electronic Edition has provided further support for the reading he developed in the first edition of his Commentary, but has not led him to make any substantial changes.

22 Hacker 2001, viii.

Baker and Hacker's overall goal of providing a comprehensive interpretation of Part I of the *Philosophical Investigations* led them to take a retrospective look at the *Nachlass*. Consequently, they approached it as a source of additional information, not only about the significance of cryptic and much-debated passages, but also about the broader commitments that informed the book as a whole. However, the *Nachlass* can only provide guidance to our reading of the *Philosophical Investigations* – or the *Tractatus* – once we can say which passages express the outlook of the author of the book in question, and which set out views he would have rejected or repudiated.[23] In some cases, the material in these source manuscripts that was not used in the final text may have been left out of the revision process simply because another passage made the same point more effectively. In other cases, Wittgenstein may have had a change of mind about the passage, perhaps because he decided that two topics that were intertwined in the draft material did not belong together in the final version, or even because he no longer accepted the ideas set out there. Thus, the mere fact that a particular passage, whether a first draft or a polished final version, sets out or argues for an idea, gives us no reason to believe that it is Wittgenstein's view. In certain cases, such as claims uttered by an interlocutory voice, sometimes indicated by quotation marks, or a double dash, or passages containing ideas that are later subjected to criticism, or remarks that set out views that contradict other commitments, the very fact that those passages say what they do is our best evidence that we should *not* attribute them to Wittgenstein.[24]

Most of the subsequent work on the *Nachlass* published in the 1980s and 1990s turned on identifying the first formulation of "middle period" positions that could be attributed to the *Philosophical Investigations,* and so stressed the continuities between Wittgenstein's writing in the 1930s and the *Philosophical Investigations*.[25] This cohort of pre-digital *Nachlass* researchers recognized that the process of revision provided an access to the development of Wittgenstein's

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23 This paragraph is taken from Stern 2010a.

24 A closely related issue concerns the question of which parts of Wittgenstein's writings set out his own considered views, and which parts explore views that he was merely entertaining, or set out views that were to be the target of criticism.

25 These included Hintikka and Hintikka's *Investigating Wittgenstein* (1986), Hilmy's *The Later Wittgenstein* (1987), Monk's *The Duty of Genius* (1990), Nyíri's essays on the emergence of Wittgenstein's philosophy (in his 1986, 1992), my *Wittgenstein on Mind and Language* (1995), Sedmak's *Kalkül und Kultur* (1996), Kienzler's *Wittgensteins Wende zu seiner Spätphilosophie* 1930-1932 (1997) and Rothhaupt's *Farbthemen in Wittgenstein's Gesamtnachlass* (1996).

philosophy that could not be gained from the published material alone. For all our differences over matters large and small, we agreed in their overall approach to the development of Wittgenstein's thought. We construed the *Philosophical Investigations* as in part a systematic articulation of ideas developed in manuscripts from the 1930s, and in part a reaction to Wittgenstein's work in the *Tractatus* and the manuscripts written in 1929 and the very early 1930s. We traced the first emergence of key themes from the *Philosophical Investigations* in the *Nachlass*. We gave particular attention to identifying turning points in Wittgenstein's manuscripts, passages that, we claimed, resolved long-standing disputes about the positions adopted by the author of the *Philosophical Investigations*. We looked for "crucial passages... passages in which he decisively changes his conception of the nature of mind and language, moving away from the *Tractatus* and toward the *Philosophical Investigations*."[26] In Hintikka's vivid turn of phrase, we looked for "the 'smoking gun' that clinched the case in Wittgenstein's notebooks or in other unpublished materials."[27] In searching for passages that marked a transition from an earlier position to a later one, we were primed to look for a steady process of development in the content of Wittgenstein's views. Indeed, this research led, for the most part, to readings of the positions Wittgenstein sets out in the 1930s as early formulations of the leading ideas of the *Philosophical Investigations*. In the 1990s, it seemed likely that the digital edition of the *Nachlass* would lead to a new focus on the details of the revision of Wittgenstein's remarks from first drafts to final formulation, and the comparison of his use of key terms at different stages of the development of his thought, as it was clear that computer searching would make this kind of research far easier. However, the first, pre-digital generation of *Nachlass* scholars had already done a great deal to illuminate connections and continuities between the *Nachlass* and the finished work.[28]

At first sight, Cora Diamond's much-discussed reading of Wittgenstein,[29] with its stress on the unity of his philosophy, and the "resolute" interpretations of Wittgenstein's work it has inspired might seem to be quite incompat-

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26 Stern 1991, 205.

27 Hintikka 1996, 6.

28 For previous discussion of the methodological issues raised by such a genetic approach, see: Glock 1990; McGuinness 2002; Rothhaupt 1996; Schulte 1992, ch. 1.3; Schulte, introduction to Wittgenstein 2001; Schulte 2005; Stern 1996, 2005, 2010a; von Wright 1982.

29 See e.g.: Diamond 1991; Crary and Read 2000.

ible with a reading of his writing from the 1930s that turns on his criticism of his earlier views. Early critics of the New Wittgensteinian reading, including Hacker in "Was He Trying To Whistle it,"[30] observed that "defenders of Diamond's interpretation have produced no evidence at all from the post-1929 documents to support their view,"[31] and argued that there was no trace of the argumentative strategy Diamond attributes to the *Tractatus* in the *Nachlass*. Diamond has since replied that an insistence on the unity of Wittgenstein's philosophy is quite compatible with a recognition that it did change and develop in crucial respects, especially his conception of clarification.[32] This view, which Conant has dubbed "mild mono-Wittgensteinianism," faces, as he puts it, the challenge of both doing "full justice to the profound discontinuity in Wittgenstein's thinking without neglecting... the extent to which it is folded within a fundamental continuity in his philosophy" while also doing "full justice to the profound continuity in his thinking without minimizing ...the extent to which it is folded within a fundamental discontinuity in his philosophy."[33] But with this acknowledgement of the complex interplay of continuity and discontinuity in the development of Wittgenstein's philosophy, we have moved a considerable distance from the radically unitary reading that Diamond originally seemed to be advocating, and back to the task of mapping out the similarities and dissimilarities between Early, Middle and Later Wittgenstein, and looking for turning points in his writing.

Since the publication of the *Bergen Electronic Edition*, a number of interpreters, myself included, have challenged these methods, which assumed that once one had identified the turning point at which the distinctive views of "the later Wittgenstein" had emerged, one could then mine the subsequent "middle period" writings for evidence of those views. Such a focus on continuities in wording can lead one to overlook deep discontinuities between the use of those words in earlier and later contexts. For instance, Hacker's strategy of using evidence from the source manuscripts to construe the *Philosophical Investigations* as committed to certain views, such as individualism about meaning and the autonomy of grammar, depends on the presumption that there is a basic continuity between the selected remarks and the excluded remarks, a presumption

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30 Crary and Read 2000, ch. 14; reprinted *in* Hacker 2001, ch. 4.

31 Hacker 2001, 139; see also 126-140.

32 Diamond *2004*.

33 Conant 2007, 31-32; see also notes 19 and 136.

that fails to take the authorial act of selecting text for publication sufficiently seriously.[34] James Klagge and Alfred Nordmann provide an acute summary of the dangers of this approach:

> One of the reasons we scholars want to read the *Nachlass* is that we are very content with Wittgenstein's formulations – happy to read and quote them. The formulations seem perfectly adequate for our purposes. Indeed, when Wittgenstein is least satisfied we tend to be most satisfied, because he is least satisfied when he falls into the idiom that we find most familiar and understandable, and that he does not want to buy into. So what are we to make of the fact that he, and only he, is not content? Are we really keeping that in mind every time we quote something from the *Nachlass?* How would Wittgenstein scholarship be different if we decided to restrict ourselves to those formulations about which we are fairly confident that he considered them adequate?[35]

If one draws a dividing line in the early 1930s, like Hacker and Fogelin, then one will presume that, other things being equal, material written after that point states the views of the "later Wittgenstein" and can all be mined for statements of the later Wittgenstein's philosophical methods and his views about the nature of grammar and rules of language. This will lend substantial support to a reading of the *Philosophical Investigations* on which the identification of grammatical rules, and their use, in Hacker's Strawsonian turn of phrase, to police the bounds of sense, plays a central role. On the other hand, one may, like Schulte, Pichler, and myself, construe this material as evidence about Wittgenstein's outlook at the time, rather than a settled conviction that he maintained in later years. On this alternative reading, Wittgenstein was attracted, during the first half of the 1930s, to a conception of philosophy on which its aim is to clarify, in a systematic way, the rules of our language in a philosophical grammar. However, he gave up this overarching approach in favor of piecemeal criticism of specific philosophical problems by the time he composed the first draft of the *Philosophical Investigations* in 1936-7.[36]

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34 For a more detailed defense of this claim, see Stern 2005 and 2010a. See also Schulte 2002, Pichler 2004, and Stern 2004 and 2010.

35 Wittgenstein 1993, ix, n. 4.

36 For an elaboration of this approach to Wittgenstein's method, see Schulte 2002, Stern 2004, ch. 5.

If we follow Hacker's reading we will construe Wittgenstein, not only in the early 1930s, but also throughout the rest of his career, as a philosophical grammarian, using the rules of our ordinary language to make clear the bounds of sense and so rule out certain philosophical claims and theories as mistaken. In that case, we will be inclined to draw a sharp line between scenarios that are logically possible, and thus conceivable, on the one hand, and those that are logically impossible, ruled out by the grammar of our language on the other. Traditional philosophy makes claims that may appear attractive, but on closer examination they prove to be nonsense, for they break grammatical rules. The task of the Wittgensteinian philosopher is, accordingly, to provide arguments that make these errors clear. If however, we give up the idea that it is the rules of our ordinary language that enable us to demarcate sense and nonsense, we also have to give up the correlative notion that there is a clear boundary between sense and nonsense. Whether or not a particular form of words makes sense does not simply depend on the rules of our language, but on the particular circumstances in which we are drawn to utter them, and the reasons we have for finding them attractive. Our attention turns from the question of whether the words under examination are grammatically well formed to the fantasies, or illusions, that motivate us to say such things, and lead us to offer another form of words when it turns out that our first formulation misfires.

My own view is that Wittgenstein was continually moving back and forth between proto-philosophical theorizing and Pyrrhonian criticism of such theories, and that we can find evidence for and against a "resolute" reading of his work at every stage of his career. Rather than looking for a decisive dividing line that clearly separates an earlier Wittgenstein who proposed various philosophical theories, and a later Pyrrhonian Wittgenstein who resolutely criticized such theories, we need to recognize that Wittgenstein felt the pull of both these impulses – the attractions of philosophical theorizing, and the critical attack on those theories – throughout his life. We can see the dialectic between these impulses at work in every stage of his career. However, it takes on a particularly central role in the transitional period that begins with his return to Cambridge in 1929 and ends with the composition of the Early Investigations in Norway in 1936-7.

While recent research has certainly made use of the opportunities provided by digital search, such editorial and philological questions have not been, for the most part, at the centre of attention. Instead, the principal contribution of the digital edition, in terms of new approaches to understanding

Wittgenstein, is the way it has made his work as a whole much more accessible, now that it is no more difficult to read his manuscripts and marginalia than the published works. Now that the entire Wittgenstein *Nachlass* can be easily surveyed by anyone with access to the digital edition, the pitfalls of the pre-digital strategy of casting light on the published work by looking back at the earliest sources and the history of their revision have become apparent. If one focuses on those source texts in isolation, it is only too easy to construe Wittgenstein's manuscripts as a record of the gradual emergence of his final considered views, and to take the early formulations of remarks in the *Tractatus* and *Philosophical Investigations,* passages that are often longer and more detailed than the final, published version, as a reliable guide to what their author really meant when he made use of those words many years later. On the other hand, digitally informed research on Wittgenstein has made possible a broader perspective on the development of his work as a whole. It has also facilitated an appreciation of the great distance that often separates the forceful statement of philosophical theses in Wittgenstein's manuscripts from the 1930s and the nuanced placement of those words within a larger dialogical framework in the *Philosophical Investigations.* Thus, while the first, pre-digital, stage of research on the *Nachlass* in the 1980s and 1990s tended to interpret the *Tractatus* and *Philosophical Investigations* as restating and further articulating positions that Wittgenstein had arrived at in the source manuscripts, recent work on the *Nachlass* has led to a new appreciation of the distinctive style and character of Wittgenstein's masterpieces.

At this point, I would like to turn back to the passage from the *Philosophical Grammar* with which we began.

3. Conclusion: Fogelin and the Paradox of Interpretation

In the opening chapter of *Taking Wittgenstein at his Word,* Fogelin observes that as far as he has been able to discover, the paradox of interpretation makes its first appearance in Wittgenstein's writings in §9 of the *Philosophical Grammar.* He adds in a footnote: "in all likelihood, there are earlier occurrences of this paradox, or at least anticipations of it, that I have not found."[37] In view of the central role that this passage plays in his interpretation of Wittgenstein on

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37 Fogelin 2009, p. 20, n. 5.

rule-following, and the ease with which the question of the presence of earlier formulations of the paradox can be explored using the *Bergen Electronic Edition,* one could hardly ask for a better example of the widespread reluctance to make use of the *Nachlass* by many working on Wittgenstein.

A search of the Wittgenstein *Nachlass* for all instances of the word *Deutung* (interpretation) provides some support for *both* of Fogelin's proposals concerning the origins of the paradox of interpretation. On the one hand, the words Fogelin quotes from the *Philosophical Grammar* do make up the first statement of the paradox in Wittgenstein's writings. On the other hand, each paragraph was originally composed on a separate occasion, most of them several years earlier.

The first time the four paragraphs all come together is in Part II of MS 114, a reworking of material from the *Big Typescript*[38], from which paragraphs [a], [c] and [d] were selected. They are followed by the first occurrence of [b], Wittgenstein's parenthetical methodological remark. It is only in MS 140, a further reworking of that material, and the basis for the *Philosophical Grammar*, that all four remarks occur in their present order. Only [c] is reused later, in §229 of *Zettel*.[39]

Paragraph [a], the introduction of the paradox, was the first to be drafted, on page 278 of MS 109, the fifth of a series of volumes that Wittgenstein used to keep a record of his work in progress from January 1929 onward, dated 29 January 1931. An early version of the fourth and final paragraph, [d], the defactoist response, was written down a couple of weeks later, on 15 February 1931, on page 110 of the sixth volume in that series, MS 110. While the wording is rather different from the final version, the point is already clearly stated; later revision is a matter of making it sharper and more concise. The third paragraph, [c], which further develops the paradox, first occurs on page 267 of MS 110, and is dated 2 July 1931. These three – [a], [c], and the source material for [d] – were typed up not long afterward, when Wittgenstein selected passages from his notebooks for use in his book project. That typescript, TS 211, was then cut up into slips, rearranged into a topical order (TS 212), and then typed up afresh, in what has become known as the *Big Typescript* (TS 213). These three remarks are in close proximity in sections 4 and 5 of the first chapter of that book. Near the end of §4, [a] is immediately followed by [c]; an early version of [d] follows shortly afterward, part of §5.

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38 Wittgenstein 2000a, 2005.

39 Wittgenstein 1967.

What can we learn from this excavation of the sources of Fogelin's chosen passage from §9 of the *Philosophical Grammar*? First, that while these ideas are first formulated during the first half of 1931, they do not come together in a single, forcefully expressed sequence until Wittgenstein's work on revising the *Big Typescript*, circa 1934. Even then, our passage does not play a role in the articulation of an extended train of thought in the opening chapters of the *Philosophical Grammar*. Instead, it is just one more example that drives home the principal claim of the opening chapter of the *Big Typescript*, namely that mental processes of understanding, meaning, and interpreting, whether of a proposition, a word, or a command, "drop out of our considerations", to borrow words from the title of the first section of that chapter. Indeed, until Fogelin noticed the way that it prefigures a central idea in Wittgenstein's later philosophy, the passage had attracted no attention at all.

When Wittgenstein did develop these ideas during the second half of the 1930s, in his discussion of the paradox of interpretation in the early versions of the *Philosophical Investigations*, where that paradox is the culmination of his discussion of a series of related paradoxes that runs through the first two hundred sections of that book,[40] he did not make any use of his previous drafts. Furthermore, unlike the paradoxes of ostensive definition, explanation, intentionality, and private ostensive definition, which are discussed concisely in the *Philosophical Investigations,* the paradox of interpretation is a leading theme throughout §§143-242. It is first explicitly introduced in §143, discussed in §§144-155, which also introduce a closely related paradox at §151 concerning what is involved in understanding the system behind a series of numbers, and is then ostensibly put to one side while related issues are explored for over 20 remarks. Wittgenstein reintroduces the paradox of understanding of §151 in §179, and the paradox of interpretation then returns to centre stage in §185. The discussion of the paradox of interpretation in §§198-202, often regarded as the key statement of Wittgenstein's paradox, and treated by Fogelin as essentially a restatement of the argument of §9 of the *Philosophical Grammar,* is really only the high point of a far more extensive and more complex discussion of a whole host of related issues, a discussion that continues for another 40 remarks afterwards. A key point in §202 of the *Philosophical Investigations*, presented as a consequence of the resolution of the paradox of interpretation presented in §201, is that following a rule is a

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40 For a much more detailed account of the role of these paradoxes in the argument of the *Philosophical Investigations*, see Stern 2004, chs. 4-6.

practice, a point that is not mentioned in the *Philosophical Grammar*. So while the paradox is memorably stated in §9 of the *Philosophical Grammar*, its role is substantially different on that occasion.

Still, one might ask, once we note that the early formulation of the paradox of interpretation plays a very different role in the *Philosophical Grammar* from the *Philosophical Investigations*, how much difference does this really make? Why shouldn't one draw on an early and striking formulation of an idea to cast light on a more intricate and involved later development of that idea? While this can certainly be an attractive strategy, the danger is that the initial exposition, precisely because of its clear and didactic tone, may prove an oversimplified, or even misleading, guide to the fully developed work. A full exploration of the different approaches to the paradox of interpretation in the two books would call for a far-reaching evaluation of the differences between Wittgenstein's conception of rule-following and grammar in the early 1930s and the late 1930s. But at the very least, we can say that Wittgenstein's target is a much narrower one when the paradox is initially formulated, namely the idea that there must be some intermediary that connects a speaker's words and a hearer's understanding, or an order and its execution. As a result, the paradox and its resolution can be concisely set out in a few short paragraphs. In the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein uses it to attack the very idea that rule-following is ungrounded unless we can give an explanation that does not rely on anyone's responses, a grounding that is global and context-less. But this is not an idea that can be rebutted, or even set out, in a few sentences, and one of the leading tasks of that book is to explore the many ways in which it can distort our self-understanding, and how best to resist it.

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