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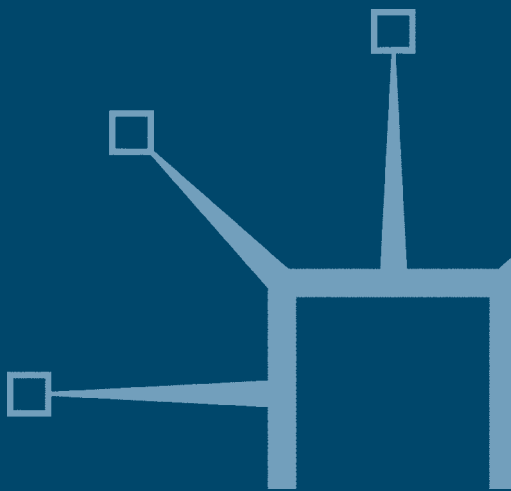
Understanding Wittgenstein's On Certainty

Danièle Moyal-Sharrock



Understanding Wittgenstein's *On Certainty*

Also by Danièle Moyal-Sharrock

THE *THIRD* WITTGENSTEIN

THE POST-*INVESTIGATIONS* WORKS

Understanding Wittgenstein's *On Certainty*

Danièle Moyal-Sharrock
Department of Philosophy
University of East Anglia, UK

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In memory of my father, Michael Moyal, whose laughter gave my world its depth

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Contents

List of Charts

Abbreviations of Works by Wittgenstein

AWL	*Wittgenstein's Lectures: Cambridge, 1932–1935*, from the notes of A. Ambrose and M. MacDonald. A. Ambrose (ed.). Oxford: Blackwell, 1979.
BB	*The Blue and Brown Books*. 2nd edn. Oxford: Blackwell, 1969.
CE	'Cause and Effect: Intuitive Awareness' (1937); 'Appendix A: Immediately Aware of the Cause' (1937–38); 'Appendix B: Can We Know Anything but Data?' (1938). In PO, 371–426.
CL	*Cambridge Letters: Correspondence with Russell, Keynes, Moore, Ramsey and Sraffa*. Brian McGuinness and G.H. von Wright (eds). Oxford: Blackwell, 1985.
CV	*Culture and Value*, G.H. von Wright (ed) in collaboration with H. Nyman. Trans. P. Winch. Amended 2nd edn. Oxford, Blackwell, 1980.
LC	*Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*, from the notes of Y. Smithies, R. Rhees, J. Taylor and C. Barrett (ed.). Oxford: Blackwell, 1966.
LFM	*Wittgenstein's Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics, Cambridge 1939*, from the notes of R.G. Bosanquet, N. Malcolm, R. Rhees and Y. Smythies. C. Diamond (ed.). Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1976.
LPE	'Notes for Lectures on "Private Experience" and "Sense Data"', in PO, 202–367.
LO	*Letters to C.K. Ogden*. G.H. von Wright (ed.), with an appendix containing letters by F.P. Ramsey, 1923–24. Oxford: Blackwell, 1973.
LPP	*Wittgenstein's Lectures on Philosophical Psychology 1946–47*, notes by P.T. Geach, K.J. Shah and A.C. Jackson. P.T. Geach (ed.). Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1988.
LW I	*Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology. Volume I*. G.H. von Wright and Heikki Nyman (eds). Trans. C.G. Luckhardt and Maximilian A.E. Aue. Oxford: Blackwell, 1982.
LW II	*Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology. Volume II*. G.H. von Wright and H. Nyman (eds). Trans. C.G. Luckhardt and M.A.E. Aue. Oxford, Blackwell, 1992.
MWL	Moore's *Wittgenstein Lectures in 1930–1933*, in PO, 46–114.
NB	*Notebooks 1914–16*. G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright (eds). Trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, 2nd edn. Oxford: Blackwell, 1979.

OC	*On Certainty*. G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright (eds). Trans. D. Paul and G.E.M. Anscombe. Amended 1st edn. Oxford: Blackwell, 1997.
P	'Philosophy' (sections 86–93 of the Big Typescript), in PO, 160–99.
PG	*Philosophical Grammar*. R. Rhees (ed.). Trans. A. Kenny. Oxford: Blackwell, 1974.
PI	*Philosophical Investigations*. Trans. G.E.M. Anscombe. 2nd edn. Oxford: Blackwell, 1997.
PLP	*The Principles of Linguistic Philosophy*, by F. Waismann. R. Harré, (ed.). 2nd edn. London: Macmillan, 1997. Preface by Gordon Baker.
PO	*Philosophical Occasions: 1912–1951*. J.C. Klagge and A. Nordman (eds). Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1993.
PR	*Philosophical Remarks*. R. Rhees (ed.). Trans. R. Hargreaves and R. White. Oxford: Blackwell, 1975.
RC	*Remarks on Colour*. G.E.M. Anscombe (ed.). Trans. L.L. McAlister and Margarete Schättle. Oxford: Blackwell, 1980; 1st edn. 1977.
RFM	*Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*. G.H. von Wright, R. Rhees and G.E.M. Anscombe (eds). Trans. G.E.M. Anscombe. 3rd revised edn. Oxford: Blackwell, 1978.
RPP I	*Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*. Vol. I. G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright (eds.). Trans. G.E.M. Anscombe. Oxford: Blackwell, 1980.
TLP	*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Trans. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961.
Z	*Zettel*. G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright (eds). Trans. G.E.M. Anscombe. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970.

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There are works without whose insights I could not have begun to understand *On Certainty*. One work comes before all others: Avrum Stroll's *Moore and Wittgenstein On Certainty*. Stroll's masterly elucidation of Wittgenstein's third masterpiece has, for the last decade, provided all students and scholars of *On Certainty* with light, map and compass in their exploration of that work. Any commentary of *On Certainty* owes Avrum Stroll its bearings. Mine owes him more. It is indebted to his enthusiastic encouragement, the richness of his comments, and the privilege of his friendship. Avrum Stroll's natural and robust grasp of Wittgenstein is for me an ongoing inspiration.

Other works were essential in illuminating the conceptual way: Gertrude Conway's *Wittgenstein on Foundations, Marie McGinn's Sense and Certainty: A Dissolution of Scepticism*, Thomas Morawetz's *Wittgenstein and Knowledge: The Importance of On Certainty*, and Crispin Wright's 'Facts and Certainties'. I am also indebted to works whose more general scope shed a nonetheless acute and indispensable light on my reading of *On Certainty*. These are John V. Canfield's seminal publications on concept formation, Lars Hertzberg's defining writings on trust and primitivity, Frank Cioffi's perspicuous 'placement' of the empirical, and Jacques Bouveresse's book-length study of Wittgenstein's conception of necessity.

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I am also grateful for the support of the University of Geneva.

And what we expect with certainty is essential to our whole life.

Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*

Introduction

The form of *On Certainty*

The difficulty of *On Certainty*

Avrum Stroll notes that of all of Wittgenstein's later works, *On Certainty* is perhaps 'the hardest … to get a handle on' (2002, 446). I agree with this verdict, and suggest that the reason for it lies in the circumstances of composition and in the style of the work. *On Certainty* is a work in progress, an unrevised and *possibly* unfinished, work whose final entries Wittgenstein wrote two days before he died. In it, Wittgenstein is seen in the midst of philosophical analysis and questioning. If, as was demonstrated by Alois Pichler, the style of the later Wittgenstein is generally dramatic, vivid and investigative,[1] *On Certainty* stands out as more dramatic, vivid and investigative still. Indeed, in *On Certainty*, it can be said that Wittgenstein is philosophizing *live*. He has a very specific problem to solve and is, more than in any other work, seen in the throes of solving it.

Upon opening *On Certainty*, the reader is abruptly drawn behind the scenes to witness the struggle of a philosopher alone with his subject. We are taken on an intellectual journey, where all is expressed and shared: the questioning, the perplexity, the wavering, the seeming contradictions, the frustration and the near resignation; but also the upward path, the sightings, the apprehensions, the unfolding of the evidence, the deliberations, the suspense and the solutions. The result, for the reader, of this seemingly chaotic and unsettled development, is double edged. It can make for a disconcerting, or even discouraging reading; but it can also make for one of the most powerfully engaging readings in all of philosophy. Our having to *live the text*, follow Wittgenstein through the delineation of his thought, become tuned to his developing nuances, to the subtleties of his internal allusions, the precise weight of his emphases, the sometimes misleading use of his words, the obscure and yet unavoidable interrelatedness of the various strands of his thought, is what makes *On Certainty* the

most fascinating and challenging of Wittgenstein's works. It also makes it a work which, if the reader is not drawn into the intellectual adventure, remains impenetrable.

On Certainty as a work

In fact, what has posthumously been entitled *On Certainty* are unpolished notes written by Wittgenstein between 1949 and 1951. As G.H. von Wright indicates:

> Wittgenstein's writings in the last two years of his life (after May 1949) never advanced to the typescript stage. In these writings three main themes can be clearly distinguished. The one which is treated most fully concerns knowledge and certainty, and what Wittgenstein wrote on this theme was published under the title *On Certainty* in 1969. (1982, 59)

It may be objected, then, that the notes which make up *On Certainty* cannot be called a 'work'. What can and cannot rightly be called a work in Wittgenstein's corpus is debatable, and the discussion would have to include *Philosophical Investigations*, which Wittgenstein himself did not regard as a finished work.[2] As Michael Biggs and Alois Pichler remark: 'The expression "Wittgenstein's works" may be interpreted in a number of ways' (1993, 7), but what is clear is that any stringent definition of 'a work' would leave us with a much diminished Wittgenstein corpus. Indeed, it would consist of a single work. The *Tractatus*, as Guido Frongia and Brian McGuinness write, is 'the sole work that Wittgenstein considered finished enough to be printed', and we would be hard put to find, after the *Tractatus*, any of his own writings that Wittgenstein would have regarded as a 'finished work' (1990, 3). And yet, about the notes that make up *On Certainty*, G.H. von Wright has this to say:

> During the last year and a half of his life, Wittgenstein wrote almost exclusively about knowledge and certainty. These writings possess a thematic unity which makes them almost unique in Wittgenstein's whole literary output. … Considering that the remarks constitute a first, unrevised manuscript they seem to me remarkably accomplished both in form and content. (1982, 166)

That, in spite of being unpolished, these notes possess a thematic unity unparalleled in Wittgenstein's other writings[3] and seem remarkably accomplished, is not fortuitous. They are an attempt by Wittgenstein to unravel the knots of a specific philosophical problem which he felt was posed by some of G.E. Moore's essays; and this attempt lasted a year and a half. We are not here, then, in the presence of a compilation of passages written over a 20-year span, as is the case with *Philosophical Investigations*; or of a compilation effected by someone other than Wittgenstein, as is *Remarks on the*

Foundations of Mathematics or *Zettel*.[4] *On Certainty* is an astonishingly intense treatment of a topic over a period of 18 months. This is presumably why the editors, G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright, have no qualms about calling it a 'work':

> It seemed appropriate to publish this *work* by itself. It is not a selection; Wittgenstein marked it off in his notebooks as a separate topic, which he apparently took up at four separate periods during this eighteen months. It constitutes a single sustained treatment of the topic. (OC Preface, my emphasis)

By the standards of all his writing – including *Philosophical Investigations* – *On Certainty* unquestionably qualifies as one of Wittgenstein's *works*. This much, however, must be conceded: it is a work *in progress*.

Wittgenstein's style: analysis and Cubism

> Each of the sentences I write is trying to say the whole thing, i.e. the same thing over and over again; it is as though they were all simply views of one object seen from different angles.
>
> (CV, p. 7)

In the Preface to *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein notes his inability to weld his remarks into a natural, uninterrupted order. This noncontinuity of his thoughts is one with the nature of his investigation. His remarks, he writes, are like sketches of landscape drawn from varying perspectives, and thus the book is really an album (PI Preface, vi). Although one would be hard put to trace a simple linear progression or continuation in *any* of Wittgenstein's later works,[5] this lack of progression is particularly marked in *On Certainty*, where later passages do not seem to benefit from the conclusions drawn in earlier ones.[6] Avrum Stroll calls Wittgenstein's style in *On Certainty* that of a 'broken text':

> We find this literary style already in the *Investigations* … [b]ut in *On Certainty* it is especially egregious and adds to the difficulties of understanding the work. By a broken text, I mean a literary style of writing that is non-systematic, rambling, digressive, discontinuous, interrupted thematically and marked by rapid transitions from one subject to another. It typically takes the form of pithy remarks: maxims, apothegms, aphorisms, short paragraphs or other sorts of scattered fragments. (2002, 447)

Stylistic discontinuity does not imply thematic disparity. We have seen that von Wright takes *On Certainty* to 'possess a thematic unity which makes [it] almost unique in Wittgenstein's whole literary output', and Stroll himself

finds that *On Certainty*'s apparently random jottings form 'a cohesive logical structure that is not generally recognized' (2002, 449). Indeed, as Stroll notes, there *is*, in spite of the absence of linear progression,

> … a dynamic, evolving structure to the work. It begins with a set of critical comments about Moore's proof of an external world and about Moore's claims to know, with certainty, the premises of his proof. From this beginning, the investigation branches in various directions, though it is impossible to find a straight or continuing line through any one of them. Wittgenstein comes back again and again to older comments, sometimes repeating them, sometimes varying them. But interspersed in these are sudden, nodal moments: flashes of insight that show a deepening grasp of the issues. These nodal moments carry the reader forward. There is that is a kind of stepwise, progressive movement in this apparent randomness. (2002, 449)

The impression of a 'broken text', therefore, should not prevent us from perceiving the thematic unity in *On Certainty*, nor from recognising that a problem is indeed being examined and resolved. So that, although Wittgenstein's harsh evaluation of his philosophizing in *On Certainty* has some truth to it:

> [I do philosophy now like an old woman who is always mislaying something and having to look for it again: now her spectacles, now her keys.] (OC 532)

we must recognize that the 'mislaying' is not a bad thing. This unflattering self-image of a dying philosopher can be read in the light of the less damning analysis of his 'method' in *Philosophical Investigations:* 'The same or almost the same points were always being approached afresh from different directions, and new sketches made' (Preface, v). Wittgenstein's sketching of the same landscape from multiple perspectives does not imply dispersal; it shows him surveying and making sure; he draws his conclusions repeatedly *from several angles*, not just one. And each new perspective, not only the first, demands a fresh mind, a naive approach, taking nothing for granted, accepting no previous conclusions. He must start from scratch each time; asking the same questions insistently, with just a slight variation or in a different context. It is not mere dissatisfaction with previous conclusions that accounts for the repetitions, but respect for the particular which compels him to scrutinize it – each variant case bringing with it new parameters, new considerations and a new, more informed contribution to the general. The later Wittgenstein's philosophical manner is characterized by a perpetually energized ability to spring back again and again, though each time from a renewed perspective, and with a new series of words, onto the same

question. This is of course part and parcel of his aversion for definitive, dogmatic pronouncements, but it nonetheless results in a finished picture, a kind of Perspectivist or Cubist picture.

Indeed, what Ernst Gombrich has to say about Cubism captures the effect achieved by *On Certainty*'s style or method. We find the same rebellion against the reduction of forms to a flat pattern; the same vision of depth as belonging to the surface; the same attempt to resolve this paradox by exchanging a frontal, static view for a multiperspectival, truncated, disjointed and yet comprehensive one; the same reordering of the object into a 'strange medley of images'[7] which render more of the 'real' object than any single perspective or orderly representation could; the same attentiveness, not to the esoteric or the ideal, but to the ordinary and the concrete. And the same effect operates on the viewer or reader: for in both cases, the seeming confusion dissipates with the gradual recognition of what had, at first glance, seemed confused and unfamiliar.

The point of Cubism is not to inform (Gombrich 1950, 458). Similarly, Wittgenstein's work does not pretend to inform us, but only to highlight the familiar, so familiar in fact that we were no longer attending. Unlike Heidegger, in trying to understand the 'essence of language – its function, its structure', Wittgenstein does not look for 'something that lies beneath the surface', '*hidden from us*', but for 'something that already lies open to view and that becomes surveyable by a rearrangement' (PI 92). And indeed, the rearrangement itself lies open to view; as we witness Wittgenstein pondering, displacing and replacing pieces of the traditional epistemological puzzle. At first glance, the result may convey the same impressions of incompleteness and confusion produced by our first viewing of a Picasso, and yet the picture has its order and it is a finished picture. The conclusion that in *On Certainty* Wittgenstein comes to no decision about the status and nature of our basic certainty[8] is as superficial or transient as our inability to perceive the unsettling coherence of *Violin and Grapes*.[9] For the decision is there: not only in the spontaneous consistency of the repetitive conclusions he draws, but enmeshed in the whole spirit of the work, giving it its subtle yet compelling direction:

> [I believe it might interest a philosopher, one who can think himself, to read my notes. For even if I have hit the mark only rarely, he would recognize what targets I had been ceaselessly aiming at.] (OC 387)

Wittgenstein's repetitions, his frequent 'mislaying' of spectacles and keys, his saccaded, nonlinear progression strewn with echoes of *déjà vu* from earlier passages or indeed earlier works, his self-castigating remarks – all these do not point to ultimate indecision. They are the reminders that a search is going on, an insistent investigation into the resonances of the words we use, and this search itself produces its own reverberation of meaning and feeling,

much as the repetitive, haunting chords of music or poetry, or the disarrayed coherence of some pictures.

The content of *On Certainty*

'In the beginning was the deed'

> *My mother groan'd, my father wept*; Into the dangerous world I leapt,
> Helpless, naked, piping loud, *Like a fiend hid in a cloud*.
>
> From 'Infant Sorrow' by William Blake

'Im Anfang war die Tat',[10] Wittgenstein echoes Goethe in *On Certainty* (402), thereby situating our beginnings in our doing rather than in our thinking. Wittgenstein breaks here not only with biblical mythology but also with philosophical dogma. Not the sacrosanct Word, not the Logos of the Ancients, nor the Proposition of the Moderns lies at the foundation of all our thoughts and actions, but a way of acting. We are not born thinkers and if an infant is as human as an adult, then language cannot be what defines us.[11]

Shakespeare was right about the world being a stage; we are actors, born actors, pushing our way into the world in an act of forceful entry and a histrionic shriek – before we learn to speak. Other living creatures have language,[12] full-blown and intricate modes of communication, but no sophistication. Their language does not evolve into one capable of speculation, abstraction and falsity. Infants too lack this sophistication, but not the ability to evolve into it: the potential ability to develop their basic expressive language, their nonpropositional shrieks and gurgles into a propositional language capable of description and dissimulation, and subject to error. Animals will not develop the ability to command, to question, to recount, to chat; whereas these 'are as much a part of our natural history as walking, eating, drinking, playing' (PI 25). Our potential to develop these abilities is an endowment of nature; the actualization of that potential is ensured by nurture, and furthered by culture. This potential given to humans will find no actualization outside the context of a human community: 'to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life' (PI 19). A *form of life*; that is: living organisms engaged in a complex web of activities and practices. For a language to emerge or be possible, there has to be something shared. What is shared is a distinct *form* of life: the particular biosocial conditions and activities that make particular languages possible. The human form of life could not have produced a feline language; nor a feline form of life, a human language. Language and form of life are internally related: to imagine a human language is necessarily to imagine a *human* form of life, a human way of being and acting, which essentially involves both our biological make-up and our social behaviour. Both these components are necessary. And Wittgenstein introduces 'the term "language-*game*" … to bring into prominence the fact that the *speaking* of language is part of an

activity, or of a form of life' (PI 23). For a language can only be imagined *in use*.

Human language, then, is not innate, nor is it primitive. In Wittgenstein's view, language is the complicated *development* of our primitive[13] expressions, a development made possible by our participation in a human form of life. Our language is a refinement, an extension of our reactions, of our primitive *behaviour*:

> The origin and the primitive form of the language game is a reaction; only from this can more complicated forms develop.
> Language – I want to say – is a refinement, 'in the beginning was the deed'. (CV 31)

In the course of this book, we shall come across the various ways (anthropological, logical, psychological) in which behaviour – the deed – is 'in the beginning'. But the primitivity, which will most concern us, is that of our basic beliefs – the starting points of thought and action. And here, too, it will be seen that primitivity is internally linked to acting, and not saying.

The *wrong* linguistic turn – language: a false start

> I was afraid I might be completely blinded in my mind if I looked at things with my eyes and attempted to apprehend them with one or other of my senses; so I decided I must take refuge in propositions, and study the truth of things in them.
>
> Plato *Phaedo* 99E (Hackforth translation, 1972)

According to Richard Rorty, it was dissatisfaction with such inarticulate candidates for the 'starting points of thought' as 'clear and distinct ideas, sense data, categories of pure understanding, structures of prelinguistic consciousness, and the like' that moved philosophers to take a linguistic turn and seek these starting points in language itself:

> The ubiquity of language is a matter of language moving into the vacancies left by the failure of all the various candidates for the position of 'natural starting points' of thought, starting points which are prior to and independent of the way some culture speaks or spoke. (Rorty 1982a, pp. xx)

But Rorty shows he has seriously misread Wittgenstein when he places him alongside such 'prophets of the ubiquity of language' as Derrida and Foucault.[14] For Wittgenstein, language does *not* 'go all the way down' (xxx). We shall see that Wittgenstein is much more of a pragmatist[15] than even Rorty makes him out to be. The 'natural starting points of thought' are not for him in language but in our instinctive actions and reactions. There is

more to us than our conventions, not 'something Beyond' (xxiii) but something else, that is also of us – something animal:

> I really want to say that scruples in thinking begin with (have their roots in) instinct. Or again: a language-game does not have its origin in consideration [*Überlegung*].[16] Consideration is part of a language-game. (Z 391)

In *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein subverts the traditional picture of basic beliefs. They are not indubitable or self-justified propositions, but *animal* certainties. With the word 'animal', Wittgenstein does not mean to reduce these basic certainties to brute impressions. He is saying that these certainties are nonreflective, and they can be nonreflective either in that they are instinctual (or innate) certainties (such as 'I have a body'), or in that they are, or have become, automatic (reflex-like) certainties (e.g. 'This is (what we call) a hand'). Their being nonreflective or animal invites us to think of these certainties in nonpropositional terms. Indeed, although Wittgenstein often refers to our 'hinge' or basic beliefs as 'propositions', we shall see that one of the crucial accomplishments of *On Certainty* is the realization that this is a misleading result of our putting them into words. And the reason we put these animal certainties into words is at best heuristic. That is, we do it for philosophical analysis (such as Moore and Wittgenstein were doing) or linguistic instruction (such as a parent does who teaches his child: 'This is (what we call) a hand'). As we shall see, then, *hinge beliefs* – as, for example: 'The world exists', 'I have a body', 'There are others such as ourselves', 'I am here' – are certainties whose verbal articulation is *never* an *occurrence* of certainty. What philosophers like Descartes and Moore have put forward as propositions susceptible of falsification and thereby vulnerable to scepticism (e.g. 'Here is a hand') are in fact artificial formulations of certainties whose only occurrence *qua certainty* is *in action* – that is: *in* what we say (e.g. 'I'll wash my hands') and in what we do (e.g. we wash our hands). Hinge beliefs are not falsifiable propositions, empirical observations or epistemic conclusions, but logical certainties that unquestionably and ineffably stand fast for normal human beings. Though they *look like* empirical conclusions, we shall see that our certainties constitute the ungrounded, necessary,[17] pragmatic basis of our knowledge, not the objects of knowledge or the propositions at the heart of our fallible epistemic enterprises.

Wittgenstein's focus on language did not go as deep as many of his commentators – admirers and detractors – like to think. Roger Scruton is unwarranted in saying that for Wittgenstein '[t]he ultimate facts are language' (1984, 280). His turn to the linguistic did not bring Wittgenstein to view language as foundational; *that* was done by those who took the *wrong* linguistic turn. In fact, the wrong linguistic turn branched out in several directions, which can be crudely traced as follows: (a) the Postmodernist

route – 'there is nothing prior to language' – on which we have just seen Rorty attempt to embark Wittgenstein; (b) philosophers of language who believe that the foundations of knowledge can be put into the more or less ordinary language of 'observation statements'; (c) philosophers of mind who locate the origin of thought, action, indeed of knowledge, in a 'language of thought' internally represented by 'sentences of Mentalese'. It is not the object of this book to review these ramifications of the linguistic turn. Rather, to show that Wittgenstein took the *right* linguistic turn, the one originating in behaviour.

Unmediated grasp

> Wittgenstein's motive … is to put the human animal back into language and therewith back into philosophy.
>
> Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason*, 207

On John McDowell's view, 'the world is embraceable in thought' (1994, 33). In order to avoid the error-prone gap between our impressions and our concepts, McDowell attributes to our intuitions the conceptual trait of our understanding: 'the world's impressions on our senses are already possessed of conceptual content' (1994, 18). I interpret Wittgenstein as doing precisely the opposite: he sees belief as starting in the nonintellectual, nonconceptual realms of instinct and action. Belief, at this primitive level, is a *nonpropositional* attitude. It is not perception that is conceptual, but our basic or primitive ordering of the world that is nonconceptual. In McDowell's Kantian terminology, this amounts to saying that, at a basic level, our understanding is *utterly* receptive but it is nonetheless a form of *understanding*, of making sense of the world. On Wittgenstein's view, the world is *not* primitively embraceable in thought. We embrace it nonintellectually, and then move on to a more sophisticated grasp. This nonintellectual taking hold of the world is heuristically or artificially articulated in so-called hinge propositions. It is, however an immediate taking-hold that is articulated here, an *Einstellung*, an (inexorable) attitude, not a reasoned understanding. An attitude which, in spite of being nonpropositional, I shall argue (in Chapter 9), is a form of belief.

The problem with many current interpretations of *On Certainty* and, by extension, of the nature of basic beliefs, is their insistence on seeing the certainty that underpins our knowledge as itself a knowledge. As Michael Williams puts it: 'Knowledge indeed emerges out of prior knowledge' (2001, 176). To concede that this does not imply that the (more basic) knowledge is individually generated, but can be 'a shared and socially transmitted accomplishment' does not reduce the epistemic nature of the knowledge in question, and its consequent conceptual link (at least on most views, and certainly on Williams's) to justification and inference. Although Williams's *contextualism* acknowledges a default background, and a pragmatic (knowing

how) component of this background, on his view, our 'bedrock certainties' are nonetheless unavoidably propositional. For, asks Williams, how could our basic beliefs not be propositional, if they are to generate our nonbasic beliefs:

> However basic knowledge is understood, it must be capable of standing in logical relations to whatever judgements rest on it. For example, it must be capable of being consistent or inconsistent with them. But this means that even basic knowledge must involve propositional content … (2001, 97)

But the message of *On Certainty* is precisely that knowledge does not have to be at the basis of knowledge. Underpinning knowledge are not default justified propositions that must be susceptible of justification on demand,[18] but pragmatic certainties that can be verbally rendered for heuristic purposes, and whose conceptual analysis uncovers their function as unjustifiable rules of grammar. So that our basic beliefs stand to our nonbasic beliefs, not as propositional beliefs stand to other propositional beliefs, but as rules of grammar stand to propositional beliefs. Hence the absence and the uselessness of inference and propositionality.

In their efforts to gain understanding, philosophers have lost touch with the spontaneity of our beginnings. In an excessive subservience to reason, they have rationalized our every act and thought, seeking to trace a reasoning that often never was. In *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein attempts to reverse the process, to release us from the hegemony of the intellect and remind us that where we look for a thought or a reason, it is often a 'direct taking-hold' (OC 511) that has occurred. Here, at the origin of our knowledge, there are no such preliminaries as proposition, judgment and inference, but spontaneity, automatism, rule, reflex and instinct. Here, we do not go from the proposition to the deed, but vice versa: from a natural, nonreflective grasp to a sophisticated, reflective and hesitating pondering. From doing to thinking. There are no necessary epistemic intermediaries, no protocol or observation statements, no mental representations, no intervening propositions between our perceiving the world and our grasping it. Wittgenstein's conception of *objective certainty* allows us to make sense of how we *grasp* (in all the rich ambivalence of this term) reality without having to contend with the shadow of the gap-producing proposition. Indeed, going in this direction, we will not encounter any inexplicable gap; not find the ominous roadblock that philosophers travelling in the other direction are still confronted with: 'the mind/body interaction problem', as Jerry Fodor calls it (1994, 82). Instead, we find the same smooth and continuous evolution that characterizes our moving from nonlinguistic shrieks to sentences – an evolution rooted in nonpropositional assimilation, such as training and repeated exposure. Hinge beliefs are certainties whose verbal articulation for

heuristic purposes deceives us into thinking that we have here to do with propositional beliefs. In fact, their nonreflective or animal nature make them an imperceptible bridge where there once seemed an incomprehensible gap between our thinking and our acting.

The *right* linguistic turn: language from life

> As language gets its way of meaning from what it means, from the world, no language is thinkable which doesn't represent this world.
> Wittgenstein, *Philosophy* (PO 192)

Like Rorty (1982b), Wittgenstein pledged no allegiance or 'obedience to permanent nonhuman constraints' (166), but unlike Rorty, he did not let 'the contingent character of our starting-points' be reduced to our 'conversation' with our fellow humans (166). Our community is not '*ours* rather than *nature's*', not '*shaped* rather than *found*' (ibid.). It is both ours and nature's, both shaped and found. Human beings have not only a language and convention, they have language and convention rooted and enacted in a natural context. The problem with making language go 'all the way down', whether in a pseudo-Wittgensteinian philosophy of language à la Rorty or in a flagrantly anti-Wittgensteinian philosophy of mind à la Fodor, is that either way, language has no substance, no content, no life. In the first version, it is lifeless for *refusing* to relate to life, preferring delirious deferral to vital contextualization; in the latter, it is lifeless for being *unable* to transform itself into any content. How does a computational language become an intention? A unique, pulsating, momentary intention? Any attempt to retrace the fundaments of our culture, of our thoughts and language, must start with our life; not with some ghostly, implicit grammar or pseudolanguage stored in our brain and waiting to emerge from the inner to the outer, from the unvoiced to the voiced, from 'universal deep structures' to regional, open 'superficial variations' (Pinker 1994, 7, 411).[19] To Fodor's: 'one cannot learn a language unless one has a language' (1975, 64), one is tempted to reply: 'Get a life!'

As the Postmodernists have steered it, the philosophical turn to the linguistic has been a vacuous turn, a turn on itself, leading into nothing but a cul-de-sac. In the same way that, in literary criticism, Derrida and Deconstruction see language as self-contained, as not reaching out into and from the world, and so fall short of an appreciation of language as the repository of our human form of life (F.R. Leavis), in philosophy, Rorty and his brand of Pragmatism fail to grasp Wittgenstein's appreciation of language in its essentially *contextualized* nature:

> … language does connect up with my own life. And what is called 'language' is something made up of heterogeneous elements and the way it meshes with life is infinitely various. (PG 66)

For both F.R. Leavis and Ludwig Wittgenstein, language is essentially *placed*. Our language could not *mean* independently of the context of our individual acts, our cultural tradition or our human form of life: 'Words have meaning only in the stream of life', writes Wittgenstein (LW I, 913). And Leavis, in *The Living Principle*:

> Where language is concerned, 'life' is human life – is man … a language is more than a means of expression; it is the heuristic conquest won out of representative experience, the upshot or precipitate of immemorial human living, and embodies values, distinctions, identifications, conclusions, promptings, cartographical hints and tested potentialities. (1975, 42–4)

For all the focus of their genius on language, neither Leavis nor Wittgenstein ever celebrated it as a self-sufficient or self-nourishing entity. Derrida and Rorty took the wrong linguistic turn when they failed to see the obvious. That our language-games are not artificially or self-propelled but have their roots *hors-texte*.

The most detrimental result of the refusal to let go of the proposition is that it obstructs our vision of the *pragmatic* and essentially nonintellectual, noninferred assimilation which lies at the foundation of epistemic assimilation. This mote in the eye impedes the dislodgement well initiated by Wittgenstein of the *proposition* (or the thought) as the foundation of thought and action and its replacement with the more instinctive *deed*. In the following chapters, we will see that, for Wittgenstein, our language-games are poised on a nonlinguistic, nonintellectual, pragmatic certainty. Let us begin by distinguishing it from knowledge.

1
Objective Certainty versus Knowledge

Wittgenstein's last work has been posthumously entitled *Über Gewissheit – On Certainty*. This is because certainty is the subject matter of the work. In German, Wittgenstein speaks not only of *Gewissheit*, but also of *Sicherheit*,[1] and he uses other equivalent expressions: *Bestimmtheit* ('certainty'); *Versicherung* ('assurance'); *Überzeugung* ('conviction'); (*das*) *Sichersein* ('being sure'); *unbedingt vertrauen* ('trust without reservation'); *Glaube* ('belief') – the most frequently used expression being: *es steht (für mich) fest*: 'it stands fast (for me)'.[2] Wittgenstein uses these terms in an attempt – inspired by G.E. Moore and Norman Malcolm's discussions of the subject[3] – to circumscribe the nature of our basic assurance, of our assurance about such things as 'Here is a hand' or 'I am standing here'. At the outset of his examination of that assurance, Wittgenstein expresses, albeit circuitously, his conviction that this assurance is not a knowing: 'If you do know that *here is one hand*, we'll grant you all the rest' (OC 1). But of course, he does not leave it there. Much of *On Certainty* is devoted to fleshing out the distinction between certainty and knowledge. I am concerned in this chapter, to *locate* categorially the kind of certainty which is the focus of Wittgenstein's last work. Is this concept of *certainty* epistemic, or does Wittgenstein's dissociation of it from knowledge exclude our foundational certainty from the realm of epistemology?

The rejection of knowledge in favour of belief

> For when Moore says 'I know that that's…' I want to reply 'you don't know anything!'
>
> (OC 407)

In his 'Proof of an External World' (1939), G.E. Moore, took it upon himself to prove the existence of external objects. This endeavour began with an *act*, the act of showing his hand, and this purported to be a *display of knowledge*. One of the conditions for the validity of a proof, writes Moore anticipating

sceptical objection, is that one must 'know' one's premise (i.e. 'Here is a hand'),[4] and although he admits his inability to prove he knows his premise, Moore does not see this as invalidating; he insists that he cannot but 'know' that 'Here is a hand':

> How absurd it would be to suggest that I did not know it, but only believed it, and that perhaps it was not the case! You might as well suggest that I do not know that I am now standing up and talking … (1939, 146–7)

That is precisely what Wittgenstein will suggest – Moore does not *know* that he is now standing up and talking or that the object he is waving is a hand. This is not to say that Wittgenstein is questioning or belittling Moore's assurance about these things, only that he believes this assurance to be of another, more foundational, breed than knowing:

> I should like to say: Moore does not *know* what he asserts he knows, but it stands fast for him, as also for me; regarding it as absolutely solid is part of our *method* of doubt and enquiry. (OC 151)
>
> To say of man, in Moore's sense, that he *knows* something; that what he says is therefore unconditionally the truth, seems wrong to me. – It is the truth only inasmuch as it is an unmoving foundation of his language-games. (OC 403)
>
> But on the other hand: how do I *know* that it is my hand? Do I even here know exactly what it means to say it is my hand? – When I say 'how do I know?' I do not mean that I have the least *doubt* of it. What we have here is a foundation for all my action. But it seems to me that it is wrongly expressed by the words 'I know'. (OC 414)

Wittgenstein then does not question the legitimacy of Moore's assurance, only whether Moore and philosophical tradition are right to call it 'knowledge'. Does 'knowing' correctly describe my assurance about something as basic as this being a hand I am waving or about my presently being in England?

> … why don't I simply say with Moore 'I *know* that I am in England'? Saying this is meaningful *in particular circumstances*, which I can imagine. But when I utter the sentence outside these circumstances, as an example to shew that I can know truths of this kind with certainty, then it at once strikes me as fishy. – Ought it to? (OC 423)

It ought to. In *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein examines our various expressions of assurance, surveying our use in ordinary language of 'I know', 'I believe', 'I am certain' and analogous expressions, in an effort to determine whether

Moore's incontestable assurance can rightly be called 'knowing'. He will conclude that it cannot. But we must follow Wittgenstein to this conclusion.

'Objective certainty'

It must first be noted that Wittgenstein adheres to the standard view of knowledge as justified true belief,[5] and therefore sees not only the claim to knowledge, but also the possession of knowledge as conceptually linked to justification:

> 'I know it' I say to someone else; and here there is a justification. (OC 175)
>
> Whether I *know* something depends on whether the evidence backs me up or contradicts me. (OC 504)

In the process of comparing and contrasting knowledge and certainty, Wittgenstein distinguishes *objective* from *subjective* certainty:

> With the word 'certain' we express complete conviction, the total absence of doubt, and thereby we seek to convince other people. That is *subjective* certainty.
>
> But when is something objectively certain? When a mistake is not possible. But what kind of possibility is that? Mustn't mistake be *logically* excluded? (OC 194)

Subjective certainty is *not* what Wittgenstein is after. For, although the certainty he is striving to define *is* a certainty that stands fast for us individually ('I act with *complete* certainty. But this certainty is my own' (OC 174)), it cannot be *merely* personal:[6] 'But it isn't just that *I* believe in this way that I have two hands, but that every reasonable person does' (OC 252). The certainty in question, though in a way personal, is also a shared or collective certainty:[7]

> The truths which Moore says he knows, are such as, roughly speaking, all of us know, if he knows them. (OC 100)

Complete conviction, the total absence of doubt, suffices for someone to be subjectively certain (OC 194), but there must be something beyond *personal* conviction if the certainty is to be shared by 'every reasonable person'. If the claim to certainty is to be more than a subjective claim, the certainty needs to be objectively established:

> Even if the most trustworthy of men assures me that he *knows* things are thus and so, this by itself cannot satisfy me that he does know. Only that

> he believes he knows. That is why Moore's assurance that he knows … does not interest us. (OC 137)
>
> It needs to be *shewn* that no mistake was possible. Giving the assurance 'I know' doesn't suffice. For it is after all only an assurance that I can't be making a mistake, and it needs to be *objectively* established that I am not making a mistake about *that*. (OC 15)

But what is it to *objectively* establish that I am not making a mistake about *that*? If all it is to adduce compelling grounds for my conviction – ' "I have compelling grounds for my certitude." These grounds make the certitude objective' (OC 270) – then the claim to objective certainty is not really distinguishable from the claim to knowledge. Moreover, an objective certainty that is *based on grounds* – compelling or not – is susceptible of mistake: 'For there can be dispute whether something *is* certain; I mean, when something is *objectively* certain' (OC 273). The certainty Wittgenstein is seeking to define as *objective* is objective not merely as opposed to *subjective*, but as in: not based on grounds at all. For once grounds are adduced, we are in the realm of knowledge and justification. So that the only *objective certainty* that would be *categorially* distinct from knowledge is a certainty which would not depend on justification: 'giving grounds … justifying the evidence' has come to an end (OC 204). And only *that* objective certainty is categorially distinct from knowing whose imperviousness to mistake and doubt is not grounded at all, but *logical*:[8]

> The difference between the concept of 'knowing' and the concept of 'being certain' isn't of any great importance at all, except where 'I know' is meant to mean: I *can't* be wrong. (OC 8)
>
> But when is something objectively certain? When a mistake is not possible. But what kind of possibility is that? Mustn't mistake be *logically* excluded? (OC 194)

We can then conclude that although Wittgenstein *does* allude to a concept of objective certainty that is based on ('compelling' or 'telling') grounds (OC 270–1), he finds that it is not the type of objective certainty he is after. *That* concept of objective certainty – precisely because it is linked to justification – does not sufficiently differ from the concept of knowing (OC 8). Only that certainty which is *categorially* distinct from knowing – that certainty which entitles Wittgenstein to say that: ' "[k]nowledge" and "certainty" belong to different *categories*' (OC 308) because it is a *groundless*, *logical*, *nonepistemic* certainty will, in this book, be called: 'objective certainty'.[9] But many readers of *On Certainty* do not see that Wittgenstein makes a categorial distinction between knowing and (objective) certainty; much less, that he rejects knowing in favour of (objective) certainty.[10] This is due to Wittgenstein's ambiguous uses of 'know', which will be scrutinized later in this chapter in the section 'The ambiguities in Wittgenstein's uses of "know" '. But because

the point is both moot and crucial to understanding *On Certainty* and the revolutionary nature of Wittgenstein's depiction of our basic beliefs, it is important to retrace the steps that led Wittgenstein to that distinction.

'Do you know or only believe?'

> No one but a philosopher would say 'I know that I have two hands…'
>
> (Z 405)

We say we 'know' when we have gained our assurance through explicit learning – that is, 'I know that Ottawa is the capital of Canada' – or when our assurance is a result of observation or perception – 'I know I am fourth in this queue.' In the first case, we have learned something from authority: be it an encyclopaedia or a teacher; in the second, from looking and counting. Also, in either case we could give someone proof or grounds for our knowledge by repeating the investigation: showing her the encyclopaedia entry in the first instance; counting again in her presence in the second. We also say we know something when we have come to it through reasoning or when our memory has supplied us with the missing information. Sometimes, however, our assurance stems neither from authority, nor from observation, inference or recollection. I can be said to *know* that there was a lower incidence of crime in New York in 1999 than in 1997 because I have *reason* to know it – that is, I have read it in the newspapers, heard it on television, noticed that even the mayor's opponents do not contest it when he boasts of it – but I cannot be said to *know* that human beings can kill and be killed. I have not *come* to this certainty from having first questioned it, and then consulted newspapers or experts on the question. That people can kill and be killed is assumed as part of the unquestioned, unmentioned basis from which we can learn about such things as lower incidence of crime in New York. This is not to say that we *cannot* ask the question (as some children might), or that we have no experience amounting to humans killing and being killed, it is rather that this experience – though it may be the *cause* of our certainty – is not its *reason* or *ground*: 'No, experience is not the *ground* for our game of judging' (OC 131; my emphasis).

In some cases – for example, '*I have two hands*', '*I have a body*', '*I live in such and such a country*', '*I am sitting at my desk*', '*There are external objects*', '*The world exists*' – our assurance is not *due* to reasoning. Our certainty about our having a body or (natural) parents cannot be said to be *justified*, for it was never *verified*. In fact, unlike the objects of our *knowledge*, we have probably never even thought about, however ephemerally, the objects of our *objective certainty*:

> I believe that I had great-grandparents, that the people who gave themselves out as my parents really were my parents, etc. This belief may never have been expressed; even the thought that it was so, never thought. (OC 159)

And if ever we have thought that thought, it was not what spurred or confirmed our assurance. Our having two hands or parents simply got 'assumed as a truism, never called in question, perhaps not even ever formulated' (OC 87).

Moore articulates, for the sake of philosophical argument, his assurance about having hands, standing up, talking, and so on, but such assurance is usually left inarticulate. We use our hands every day, we stand up, we talk, without formulating our assurance about these things. This assurance *goes without saying*, as it were. In the same way, there seem to be many unmentioned presuppositions underlying our ordinary assertions, questions and commands that are indispensable to the intelligibility of these assertions, questions and commands. In notes contemporaneous with those that constitute *On Certainty* (end of 1949–April 1951),[11] Wittgenstein puzzles over whether to call such apparent presuppositions manifestations of 'knowing':

> Is it correct to say that the order 'Go into the house' presupposes that there is a house there and that the person giving the order *knows* it? (LW II 44; my italics)

In the next paragraph, the envisaged alternative is 'belief'. We say of someone giving the order when no house is there that he (falsely) believed one was there. Ought we not say of the other that he (rightly) *believed*, rather than *knew*, it was there?

> If someone were to say 'Go into this house' when there is no house there, we would say of him: 'He *believes* that there is a house there'. But is this less right when there actually is one there? (LW II 44; my italics)

Similarly, in the case of animals, is not *belief* more appropriate than *knowledge*? 'Does the dog believe that his master is in front of the door, or does he *know* it?' (LW II 44). In both cases, there is an unawareness or inarticulateness to the assurance that is compatible with the dispositional nature of both believing and knowing.[12] Yet to say that believing and knowing can *outlast* their expression is not to say that they do not require at least an initial act of judgment. In the two cases above, an act of judgment is not precluded, yet is it what *enables* the dog to rest in the satisfaction that this is, in fact, his master; or what *enables* someone to give the order: 'Go into the house?' Is the order 'Go into the house' *justified* by my *knowing that* there is a house there? The order: 'Go into the house!' can be voiced for all sorts of reasons: I order you to go into the house *because* I want to punish you; because I think you will catch a cold if you stay out, and so on, but I do not order you to go into the house *because* I know there is a house there. That there is a house there is the *unreasoned basis* upon which I voice my

order; *not a reason, but a cause*. Our most basic beliefs and our most basic acts are not rationally grounded:

> Would it be correct to say: 'I sit down *because* I know that this is a chair; I reach for something *because* I know that it is a book; etc. etc.' What is gained by this? (LW II 46; my emphasis)[13]

Nothing is gained because there had been no doubt there in the first place which needed allaying. The 'because' stands here not only as a superfluous, artificially imposed intermediate between my certainty and the order (or the act) but also as introducing an explanation or justification which, as such, would both result from and be susceptible of doubt. And this is the crunch, for in the cases Wittgenstein is examining, the very *possibility* of doubt is to be cast out; it is not only that doubt does not arise, but also that it *cannot* arise. Doubt here is a *logical* impossibility:

> Imagine a language-game 'When I call you, come in through the door'. In any ordinary case, a doubt whether there really is a door there will be impossible. (OC 391)

Peirce, from his nineteenth-century Pragmatic point of view, had anticipated Wittgenstein in his 'emphatic denial that indubitable belief is inferential, or is "accepted"' (1905, 362). This precludes appealing to *tacit* inference, or to something like Findlay's 'unqualified' or 'open' belief, which is 'essentially *inferential* (however much it may have come to cover cases in which this inferential element is inexplicit or suppressed)' (1961, 105; cf. 98, 99):

> No one ever taught me that my hands don't disappear when I am not paying attention to them. Nor can I be said to presuppose the truth of this proposition in my assertions etc., (as if they rested on it) while it only gets sense from the rest of our procedure of asserting. (OC 153)

Wittgenstein is here after a kind of assurance that is not *arrived at*, whether explicitly or implicitly. But can an assurance which is neither the *derived* consequence of other (implicit or explicit) beliefs, nor requires a single act of attention be called 'belief' or 'knowledge' at all, or does Wittgenstein have his options wrong? ' "Do you know or do you only believe that your name is L.W.?" Is that a meaningful question?' (OC 486).

In *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein resumes his consideration of such cases as had occupied him in *Last Writings*, volume II. The question: 'Do(es) I/you/a child/a cat know or (only/merely) believe …?' verges on the obsessive.[14] The core question seems straightforward enough – is it a knowing or

a believing? – and yet a submerged question is perceptible in (though not dependent on) his frequent qualification of the verb 'believe' with 'only/merely'. This qualification signals both Wittgenstein's ambivalent attitude towards belief – is it *merely/only* belief? – and his conception of belief as ambivalent – is belief *merely/only* that? Both questions are clearly articulated in the following passage:

> Do you know or do you only believe that what you are writing down are German words? Do you only believe that 'believe' has *this* meaning? *What* meaning? (OC 486)

There is more to belief than meets the eye, and one of Wittgenstein's tasks in *On Certainty* will be to further explore the territory of belief. Yet old habits die hard. While suspecting and at times outrightly acknowledging and tracing the contours of a belief which is not subjective, Wittgenstein has difficulty overcoming the inferior status of 'mere' belief. This difficulty is compounded by his examination of our linguistic practices which indicate that 'I believe' just does not come up to the mark of 'I know' in the hierarchy of our assurance claims. This accounts for Wittgenstein's ambivalent attitude towards believing, most clearly seen in the 1948–49 notes as he considers the difference between our claim to knowledge and our claim to certainty (where 'I am certain' is simply used as a more forceful alternative to 'I believe'):

> 'I know'
> 'I am certain'
>
> We say, for instance, 'I know that this is so' if someone reports a well-known fact to us. In this case we do not say 'I am certain that it is so'. ('I know that that is the Schneeberg.') Were I to answer 'I am certain that it is the Schneeberg', then one would say 'It isn't subject to any doubt at all!'. (LW II 45)

Also in *On Certainty*: 'if someone asked me what [a] color was called in German and I tell him, and now he asks me "are you sure?" – then I shall reply "I *know* it is; German is my mother tongue" ' (OC 528).

There is then, in our linguistic practices, a superiority attached to knowing which proves problematic for Wittgenstein. Believing and being certain do not, in our ordinary usage, carry the same weight as knowing. Wittgenstein's dilemma is as follows. He is trying to decide whether our basic assurance is a knowing or a believing. We have seen that a feature of our basic assurance is that it is underived and unjustified. Belief, therefore, seems more appropriate in that, unlike knowing, it does not *require* justification:[15]

> 'I know it' I say to someone else; and here there is a justification. But there is none for my belief. (OC 175)

> If someone believes something, we needn't always be able to answer the question 'why he believes it'; but if he knows something, then the question 'how does he know?' must be capable of being answered. (OC 550)

As G.H. von Wright notes:

> Wittgenstein is here pointing to an important conceptual difference between belief and knowledge. In order to establish that I believe that *p*, I need not give grounds for thinking *p* true. But in order to vindicate a claim to knowledge, grounds must normally be provided, that is, we must be able to tell, *how* we know this. (1982, 269)

The superfluity of *grounds* in the case of belief would then take care of the underived and unjustified, aspect of the assurance under examination here. But what of the *objective* aspect? The depreciative qualifiers ('merely/only'), which Wittgenstein attaches to belief, attest to his suspicion that in opting for belief, he would be losing the aura of indubitability and objectivity connected exclusively with knowledge. In replacing 'I know' by 'I believe' or 'I am certain' as the implicit basis of our actions, would he not be exchanging indubitability for something that smacks of subjectivity and whose object is open to correction? Thus far[16] the claim to indubitability seems to have only one face: 'I know'; so that Wittgenstein is torn – and this partly accounts for the recurrence in *On Certainty* of the question mentioned above and variants thereof – between the objectivity and maximal credibility of knowledge and the appeal of belief as not needing justification. 'Objective certainty' will be his answer, and Moore will be the one to compel Wittgenstein to the lucidity that he himself had lacked:

> When one hears Moore say 'I *know* that that's a tree', one suddenly understands those who think that that has by no means been settled.
>
> The matter strikes one all at once as being unclear and blurred. It is as if Moore had put it in the wrong light. (OC 481)

For Moore, for traditional philosophy, for ordinary users of language, as for Wittgenstein in his 'bewitched' moments,[17] knowing is the highest point attainable on the continuum of certainty. In attempting to describe this certainty which he cannot prove and which nevertheless seems to him the most indubitable of all, Moore refers to it as 'knowledge' because that is to him the concept that lies at the opposite end of 'ignorance' on our epistemic continuum and expresses the greatest degree of certainty. Wittgenstein agrees that these objects of Moore's assurance are indeed those of our most imperturbable beliefs, but disagrees that the certainty in question here is of an epistemic nature. For epistemic claims are by nature defeasible and often the product of reasoning. And Moore's certainty about having hands and external objects existing is neither grounded, nor defeasible.

The defeasibility of knowledge claims

> … knowledge cannot (by definition) be erroneous; but it is always possible for a knowledge claim to be erroneous.
>
> John Hick, *Faith and Knowledge*, 208

Reflecting on Moore's use of 'I know' brings Wittgenstein to the realization that our regard for the claim to knowledge is excessive, and that a knowledge claim is not logically more credible than a claim to certainty.[18] Although *knowing* logically implies the truth of what is known, in *claiming* knowledge, it is possible that one is merely certain and wrong; for *the claim* to knowledge logically guarantees no more truth than the claim to certainty or belief:

> And in fact, isn't the use of the word 'know' as a preeminently philosophical word altogether wrong? If 'know' has this interest, why not 'being certain'? Apparently because it would be too subjective. But isn't 'know' *just* as subjective? Isn't one misled simply by the grammatical peculiarity that 'p' follows from 'I know p'? (OC 415)

Here, Wittgenstein is struck with the full measure of our misconception that the claim to knowledge 'guarantees what is known, guarantees it as a fact'. The claim to knowledge, however honestly made, is never a guarantee of truth: 'One always forgets the expression "I thought I knew" ' (OC 12):

> The wrong use made by Moore of the proposition 'I know …' lies in his regarding it as an utterance as little subject to doubt as 'I am in pain'. And since from 'I know it is so' there follows 'It is so', then the latter can't be doubted either. (OC 178)

– or so Moore thinks. But in fact this wrong assumption is due to a confusion. As Thomas Morawetz makes clear:

> The assertion that 'I know' guarantees what is known rests on a confusion between knowing and claiming to know. On the one hand, it is a logical point that knowing guarantees what is known, not because a claim to know is invulnerable but because a vulnerable and refuted claim to know is not a case of knowing but of thinking one knows. On the other hand, the *claim* 'I know' does not guarantee or insure the truth of the object of the claim (the act of claiming *p* does not guarantee *p*), although it implies that the claimant believes *p*, is prepared to give grounds for *p*, etc. (1978, 87)

In *On Certainty*, writes Morawetz, Wittgenstein is pointing out two fallacies:

> The first is the view that the utterance 'I know' is like 'I believe' or 'I think' or 'I surmise' in that, said in appropriate circumstances and

> without deceit (including self-deceit), it is 'self-insuring' and *cannot* be a mistake …
>
> The second fallacy is that because the truth of *p* follows from the fact that I know *p*, the truth of *p* follows from the fact of my claiming to know *p*. (1978, 87–8)

Wittgenstein thinks Moore commits both fallacies (OC 21). They are due to his failure to distinguish between, on the one hand, the (standard) definition of knowledge and, on the other hand, the conditions that justify a *claim* to know. Morawetz:

> It is important to distinguish the correct view that I cannot know (or have known) anything that is false from the absurd view that I cannot claim to know, or give grounds for, anything that is false. Claiming to believe differs from claiming to know in that the latter, but not the former, is a commitment to give grounds. (1978, 86)

All empirical knowledge *claims*, however well grounded, are susceptible of doubt by others and indeed of subsequent doubt by oneself. And if *the claim* that 'I know *p*' does not, as traditionally assumed, always entail *p*, the claim to knowledge hardly differs from the claim to certainty: 'know' is then indeed '*just* as subjective' as being certain (OC 415). The gap between knowledge and certainty is not as wide as we tend to think. The categorial boundary between certainty and knowledge can only be drawn where what is really in question is the *logical* impossibility of being wrong:

> The difference between the concept of 'knowing' and the concept of 'being certain' isn't of any great importance at all, except where 'I know' is meant to mean: I *can't* be wrong. (OC 8)

That, we will see, is the exclusive prerogative of *objective* certainty. The difference then between the claim to knowledge and the claim to certainty may be simply that in the former a *commitment* is made to justification, and thus to objectivity. Wittgenstein wants both the commitment and the objectivity, only the justification is *de trop*. For the assurance here must be logically, not rationally indubitable. But it is in believing, not in knowing, that justification is optional.

The adoption of belief

Just as in the 'certain class of cases' Wittgenstein is examining, justification is meaningless, so too, the great asset of belief is that its claim *need not* comply to demands for justification or any exhibition of evidence: ' "I know it" I say to someone else; and here there is a justification. But there is none for

my belief' (OC 175). Whereas in the claim to know, an initial act of judgment is implied; an inference has been made: belief does not *demand* justification, does not imply that an inference has been made (e.g. from sense-impressions to proposition: cf. PI 486), leaving open the question of whether an initial act of judgment or, indeed, of attention is required at all.[19] The exclusion of doubt in the case of a genuine knowledge claim is backed up by some *reason* or ground, by some initial act of judgment. But, as we have seen, there is no reasoning or act of judgment underpinning our most basic certainty, because there was never any doubt or hesitation there to start with which would have prompted judgment or reasoning:

> No doubt arises about all this. But that is not enough. In a certain class of cases, we don't know what consequences doubt would have, how it could be removed, and therefore what meaning it has. (LW II 46)

Here, Wittgenstein opens wide the door to his concept of *objective certainty*. In a 'certain class of cases', doubt could not exist at all meaningfully:

> 'Do I know or do I only believe …?' might also be expressed like this. What if it *seemed* to turn out that what until now has seemed immune to doubt was a false assumption? Would I react as I do when a belief has proved to be false? or would it seem to knock from under my feet the ground on which I stand in making any judgments at all? …
>
> Would I simply say 'I should never have thought it!' – or would I (have to) refuse to revise my judgment – because such a 'revision' would amount to annihilation of all yardsticks? (OC 492)

Giving up some beliefs is like giving up our yardsticks – that is, giving up not the content, but the *form* of thinking – the very possibility of judgment. Which amounts to saying that some beliefs have the nature of rules of thought:

> 'I cannot doubt this proposition without giving up all judgment.'
>
> But what sort of proposition is that? … It is certainly no empirical proposition. It does not belong to psychology. It has rather the character of a rule. (OC 494)

A 'yardstick' or a 'rule' – in fact, a logical necessity – and still, this does not stop Wittgenstein from calling it a belief. A few passages later, to the question of whether he knows or only believes that the law of induction is true, Wittgenstein answers that it would strike him 'as nonsense to say "I know that the law of induction is true" … It would be more correct to say "I believe in the law of …" where "believe" has nothing to do with *surmising*' (OC 500).

Where, that is, 'believe' is 'believe *in*'; where belief has the resonance of faith, not reason. We will come back to this consideration of objective certainty as a belief *in*.

It is in the nature of the concept of knowledge that if a claim to knowledge be proven inappropriate, one gives it up. In the case of belief, it is also common to give up one's claim when confronted with a refutation of the proposition believed, but one is not, in all cases, as in the knowledge claim, *compelled* to do so.[20] This is why belief is the real option here. In some cases, nothing could induce one to give up one's belief: 'I could say: "That I have two hands is an irreversible belief" ' (OC 245). This irreversible belief is however not, as in the case of a religious belief or a prejudice, a subjective, stubborn belief: Indeed, it lacks the psychological quality of subjective belief and resembles a logical necessity: ' "I know" is here a *logical* insight' (OC 59) – 'I know', that is: in the way Moore uses it, which is a *wrong* use of 'I know'. The quotation marks around *I know* signal that it is not really *knowledge* that is in question, but *objective certainty*.

The ambiguities in Wittgenstein's uses of 'know'

> We just do not see how very specialized the use of 'I know' is.
> (OC 11)

Wittgenstein has come to a decision in *On Certainty* about whether our most fundamental assurance is a knowing or a believing. His suspicion about 'knowing' was fully warranted: ' "I know …" states what *I* know, and that is not of logical interest' (OC 401). But this decision is the result of much deliberation and the open arena of this deliberation is *On Certainty*. Throughout the work, Wittgenstein wrestles with the word 'know' and its inflections. He is at pains to elucidate how Moore (mis)uses it (e.g. OC 112, 178, 407, 481, 521), how it is standardly (mis)used by philosophers (e.g. OC 415, 467), how it should and should not be used (e.g. OC 483–4, 621; 41, 482, 498, 623), and how it is used in ordinary language (e.g. OC 50, 170, 175). In his consideration of these various uses, Wittgenstein often underlines the term 'know' or puts it (sometimes in a phrase or sentence) in quotation marks.[21] This is a clear indication that we have here to do with an expression that is being *scrutinized*, not *used*. Wittgenstein, however, is not systematic in this practice (e.g. OC 7), and his inconsistency has led to some grave misunderstandings, such as the interpretation of *On Certainty* as upholding a form of *knowing* or *epistemic* certainty as our basic form of assurance. As a rule of thumb in reading *On Certainty*, I suggest systematically regarding the word 'know' as *under scrutiny*, even where it is neither underlined, nor otherwise emphasized by Wittgenstein (OC 1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 14 etc.). So that the word 'know', in *all* its manifestations, should be read

in the same way it is when *underlined* or 'quoted' by Wittgenstein; that is:

- to quote Moore (e.g. OC 4);
- to highlight Moore's error in using it (e.g. OC 151);
- to correct Moore's use of it (e.g. OC 136);
- in the same way Moore was unwittingly using it (which is also the way it is sometimes used in ordinary language) that is to characterize what is in fact not knowing at all, but certainty (e.g. OC 93, 395, 528);
- to indicate (the conditions for) the correct use of the word (e.g. OC 432); how the word is correctly used in ordinary language (e.g. OC 170) or philosophically (e.g. OC 504);
- to stress one of the ways in which the expression would be misused (e.g. OC 431);
- to envisage whether using it would be appropriate in the case at hand (e.g. OC 369).

It is in cases defined at (d) that confusion is most likely. Cases where, as in the following, crucial, passage – Wittgenstein seems to be describing instances of *knowing* ('I know all that'), but is in fact describing what Moore was misnaming as knowing, that is, being objectively certain:

> 'I know all that.' And that will come out in the way I act and in the way I speak about the things in question. (OC 395)[22]

In *On Certainty*, when Wittgenstein uses 'know', he usually does it to show that it is not really 'know' that is meant, or at least not a 'knowing *that*'. Just as in cases of first-person psychological statements which he had been examining, 'here "know" means that the expression of uncertainty is senseless' (PI 247); that is: ' "I know" is here a logical insight' (OC 59) – 'here', that is: in Moore's use of it, 'I know' conveys a grammatical, not an epistemic, certainty.

Achieving a consistent and enlightening reading of *On Certainty* requires that we acknowledge it as first and foremost a *reaction* to Moore. Wittgenstein rehearses Moore's scenario and variants of it in an attempt to penetrate its intended as well as its achieved meaning, and to understand why it is at the same time so compelling and so weak. Wittgenstein's being thus moved by Moore's essays is indicative of how tenuous the line is between what Moore was saying and what Wittgenstein would have said, and indeed, will say. Of course 'Here is a hand' is indubitable; of course, Moore is right to feel he is entitled to claim supreme assurance, and yet Wittgenstein crosses the tenuous dividing line when he recognizes that the fault in Moore's scenario is a fundamental category mistake. It appears to Wittgenstein that our *knowing* something is not our ultimate way of being sure; it does not constitute our fundamental assurance about our world and ourselves. Underlying knowing is a bedrock, logically solid, *objective certainty*. A nonepistemic belief, not a knowable one.[23]

> I know, not just that the earth existed long before my birth, but also that it is a large body, that this has been established, that I and the rest of mankind have forebears, that there are books about all this, that such books don't lie, etc. etc. *And I know all this? I believe it.* (OC 288; my emphasis)

Such passages in *On Certainty* show Wittgenstein's ambivalence giving way to decision – the decision being not only to opt for unjustified believing rather than knowing as the suitable concept in such cases, but also in recognizing belief as not *only* or *merely* that which we commonly associate with subjectivity and corrigibility. Belief is not of a uniform nature and in *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein is working hard to extend our concept of it.

The extended family of belief: *nonepistemic certainty*

Belief is generally considered to be a propositional attitude: X believes that *p*, as one says. Yet I have spoken of the *nonpropositionality* of objective certainty (and will return to this in the next chapter). Should its alleged nonpropositionality not preclude referring to objective certainty as a kind of belief? This question will be the focus of Chapter 9 where Wittgenstein's apparently newfangled concept of belief will be compared to other philosophical conceptions of belief. Here, I am concerned only with Wittgenstein's classification of objective certainty as a kind of belief within his own framework – a classification that Norman Malcolm finds inconclusive.[24]

In Malcolm's view, his explicit opting for belief in such passages as OC 288 does not mean that Wittgenstein was satisfied with this option. Glossing OC 288, Malcolm insists: 'I am sure, however, that Wittgenstein does not regard "I believe it" as a happier choice of words than "I know": nor would "I am certain of it", or "I am convinced of it", or "I assume it", be any better' (1986a, 214). Malcolm's justification for this is that our 'ordinary conceptions of evidence' (ibid.) could not in such cases meaningfully apply. Malcolm is incontestably right: our *ordinary* conceptions of evidence do not apply here, but Wittgenstein has assembled reminders of a form of belief which is precisely *not* ordinary. No *ordinary* conception of belief, but belief nevertheless.

Malcolm rejects not only belief, but also any psychological term, indeed any attempt to characterize this 'fundamental thing' which does not properly belong to any language-game:

> This fundamental thing is *so* fundamental that it is difficult, or perhaps impossible, to describe it in words. One would *like* to characterise it in mental terms – to call it knowledge, or belief, or conviction, or certainty, or acceptance, or confidence, or assumption. But none of these expressions fit. All of them have their appropriate application *within* various language-games. Whereas Wittgenstein is trying to call attention to something that

> underlies all language-games .... There are indications in *On Certainty* that Wittgenstein is dissatisfied with every attempt to characterise this fact that is so fundamental to language, thought and action. (1982, 81–3)

There are two obstacles here for Wittgenstein, according to Malcolm. The only option open to him is: psychological verbs, and what Wittgenstein is trying to describe is (a) nonpsychological (b) not verbally describable. In his list of psychological verbs to be rejected, Malcolm indiscriminately includes 'I believe' and 'I am certain':

> Wittgenstein says: 'I would like to reserve the expression "I know" for the cases in which it is used in normal linguistic exchange' (OC 260). Of course the same should hold for 'I believe', 'I am certain', 'I agree', 'I assume', and also 'I do not doubt'. (1982, 82)

But Malcolm is wrong here. The same does *not* hold for 'I believe' and 'I am certain' as for the other three, and Wittgenstein nowhere says that it should. 'I believe' and 'I am certain' are precisely what *should* be used in philosophical exchange to describe the unquestionable assurance that Moore was experiencing and wrongly expressing as 'I know'. Philosophers should not use 'I know' to indicate 'objective certainty', and Wittgenstein therefore wishes to 'reserve' this expression for normal linguistic exchange, where such conceptual precision does not obtain. Philosophy is *not* 'normal linguistic exchange', but rather strives towards the *clarification* of our use of words. Whereas in ordinary linguistic exchange, we use words with 'grammatical' imprecision (and it is not the business of philosophy to interfere with this), philosophical discourse should not idly ape this imprecision. To neglect the distinction between the use of 'I know' and 'I believe' is to dismiss much of Wittgenstein's labour in *On Certainty*. Malcolm's salient point – the characterization of our fundamental assurance as nonpsychological, nonintellectual, instinctive – can be made without this wholesale rejection. He justifies it by invoking Wittgenstein's mistrust of all psychological terms: 'Here all psychological terms merely lead us away from the main thing' (OC 459). But here Malcolm should have asked himself whether Wittgenstein's treatment of these psychological terms has left them *all* intact; that is, whether belief and certainty have not lost their *exclusively* psychological or mental colouring. Subsequent to Wittgenstein's examination, especially but not only in *On Certainty*, belief and certainty can no longer be considered as merely *psychological* concepts; they are also that, but not only that.

The concept of certainty that Wittgenstein is striving to elucidate in *On Certainty* is a nonpropositional and nonepistemic concept. Yet we have seen that Wittgenstein constantly refers to this certainty as a belief. If he is right in doing this, we will need to see what kind of belief, if any, can accommodate a nonepistemic certainty. This will be the task of Chapter 9.

The redescription of grammar

The second obstacle to Wittgenstein's precise characterization of our fundamental beliefs was, for Malcolm, their not being amenable to verbal description. This, he links to a passage in OC on the indescribability of logic (OC 501):

> *Logic cannot be described*! I take this to mean that it is not appropriate for Wittgenstein to say either that he 'knows', or 'believes', or is 'certain', or is 'convinced', or 'assumes', or 'does not doubt', that his name is L.W., or that this is called a 'hand', or that the law of induction is true. None of these terms are correct. (1982, 83)

Yet Malcolm goes on to qualify this objection: he concedes that '*On Certainty* is full of grammatical remarks', that is of 'attempts to describe how a certain *expression* in the language is actually used', and that the later Wittgenstein no longer holds the view 'that any remark that expresses something noncontingent is "nonsensical" and must finally be "thrown away" (*Tractatus* 6.54)' (1982, 85). So Malcolm follows suit; he no longer considers the logical nature of hinge beliefs as the obstacle in Wittgenstein's description of them:

> The difficulty confronting Wittgenstein in *On Certainty* is *not* that what he is trying to state is a logical or conceptual necessity. It is instead a problem concerning *the words* in terms of which the necessary truth can be stated .... Can it be said that the small child 'accepts' that what he is told to sit on is a 'chair'? Isn't this too sophisticated a term to apply to him at this stage? Nor can one say that he 'agrees' that it is a chair, nor that he 'believes' this, nor even that he 'does not doubt' it. (1982, 85)

The problem has then been relocated, and Malcolm's modified objection becomes less clear: is it that there are no words in (any) language which would suit Wittgenstein's description or is Wittgenstein at loss for words? In fact, Malcolm concludes from Wittgenstein's attempts to find alternative expressions for this unfounded belief – for example, something 'stands fast for me'; a 'direct taking-hold' (OC 116, 511) – that he is altogether rejecting belief as what is in question here (1986a, 214). But what Wittgenstein is in fact rejecting as suitable candidates for the implicit assurance at the basis of all our thoughts and actions is 'knowledge' –

> Suppose I replaced Moore's 'I know' by 'I am of the unshakeable conviction'? (OC 86)
>
> I should like to say: Moore does not *know* what he asserts he knows, but it stands fast for him, as also for me. (OC 151)

and *founded* belief:

> I may be sure of something, but still know what test might convince me of error. I am e.g. quite sure of the date of a battle, but if I should find a different date in a recognized work of history, I should alter my opinion … (OC 66)

And Wittgenstein repeatedly uses 'certainty' [*Sicherheit*] and 'belief' [*Glaube*] in their extended form:

> But why *am* I so certain that this is my hand? Doesn't the whole language-game rest on this kind of certainty?
>
> Or: isn't this 'certainty' already presupposed in the language-game? Namely by virtue of the fact that one is not playing the game, or is playing it wrong, if one does not recognize objects with certainty. (OC 446)
>
> At the foundation of well-founded belief lies *belief* that is not founded. (OC 253; my emphasis)

Wittgenstein does not seem at loss for words here; there is no hint of hesitation or dissatisfaction, not even in the last passage where one would expect both, in that the ambivalence of belief is so clearly present. This clarity indicates that this is one of those passages where Wittgenstein is freed from his ambivalent attitude towards belief into an unobscured recognition of the ambivalent nature of belief.

This lengthy confrontation with Malcolm was necessary in that securing the concept of 'belief' is essential to the success of Wittgenstein's whole enterprise. Wittgenstein recognizes a certainty at the bottom of our propositional beliefs upon which they are grounded, but if it is to be basic, that certainty cannot then itself be grounded, or susceptible of truth and falsity (i.e., it cannot be propositional); and yet, it must be commensurable with our propositional beliefs if it is to interact with them at all. In retaining the concept of belief to refer to an attitude that can be both nonpropositional and propositional, Wittgenstein is smoothing the way for commensurability.

Wittgenstein's continuing use of 'belief' and 'certainty' in their extended connotations is not *faute de mieux*. He has refined these concepts, not attempted – and failed – to replace them. His alternative expressions are not meant as substitutes but as enlightening descriptions of the newly perceived aspect of a familiar concept. The features of objective certainty – that it is logically indubitable and unreasoned (these features will be scrutinized in Chapter 4) – make it clear that it is not a knowing, but a less sophisticated brand of belief. A categorial separation must be made between objective certainty and knowledge: ' "Knowledge" and "certainty" belong to different *categories*' (OC 308). But to make this categorial distinction is not to

altogether sever relations between objective certainty and knowledge. Knowledge is standardly related to belief (e.g. knowledge as justified true belief) and to consider *objective certainty* also as a kind of belief is to envisage a continuity ranging from a nonreflective, nonpropositional assurance (objective certainty) to a reflective, propositional one (knowledge). Although for the sake of conceptual clarification, a categorial distinction between objective certainty and knowledge is essential, when we come to describe the anthropological (phylogenetic and ontogenetic) role of belief in human knowledge, the categories can be ordered along a continuum. Objective certainty, then, would take its place at the beginning of the continuum, as the animal-like, instinctive starting point of human concept formation. A huge, bridging step is thereby taken towards understanding that our forms of believing can manifest themselves differently, and yet belong to a single, smooth, evolutionary continuum. After all, the nonrationality of animal belief is not reason enough, writes Richard Jeffrey, to prevent us from thinking of it as belief:

> I am content to count rats and dogs as nonrational animals. But I still want to interpret many of their doings in terms of wants and expectations, i.e., in terms of desires and beliefs, i.e., in terms of preferences (which involve degrees of belief, i.e. probabilities, as well as desires). (1985, 486)

Towards nonpropositional belief

In *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein *re-examines* the concepts of belief and certainty and shows that these concepts do not *merely* denote subjective assurance but may also denote objective assurance, which is not knowledge. We may use 'I know', 'I believe', 'I am certain' indiscriminately to articulate our commitment in the face of certain facts, but where are the real connections? They are in the *actual* commitment which our words imply. And Wittgenstein found that *where our commitment is unconditional* – that is, not grounded on evidence and therefore immune to it: 'I should stay in the saddle however much the facts bucked' (OC 616) – it is closer to the logical nature of certainty or belief than to that of knowledge. And where this certainty or belief is not subjective, that is, where it is not what *I* believe that has produced the belief but what it is *logically necessary to believe* – 'That is to say, it belongs to the logic of our scientific investigations that certain things are *in deed* not doubted' (OC 342) – this kind of belief is more precisely termed 'objective certainty'. But the most distinguishing feature of objective certainty is that it is a belief which is not susceptible of meaningful propositional articulation. It is crucial that hinge beliefs are not to be seen as propositions. Crucial in that, as we will see, Wittgenstein is here describing a certainty that is animal-like, reflex-like, and can meaningfully

manifest itself only *in* what we say and do – in our ways of acting. A belief that *is* a way of acting. This would go a long way towards making the boundary between word and deed porous, thereby rendering the incommensurability of mind and body, and its explanatory gap obsolete.

Yet some eminent Wittgenstein scholars, such as Peter Hacker, insist on considering hinge beliefs as propositions. To show that this is wrong, it is necessary that we be clear about what Wittgenstein both *considers* and *calls* 'propositions'.

2
The Nonpropositionality of Some 'Propositions'

> … the only thing that characterises a proposition as a proposition of 'essence' is its being a rule of language; that is, its not being a proposition at all.
>
> Jacques Bouveresse, *Le Mythe de l'intériorité* (my translation)

Wittgenstein, we have just seen, uses the word 'know' (and its inflections) in ways that can be misleading. Another terminological source of confusion lies in the word 'proposition', but here the confusion is often due to translation. Leafing through *On Certainty*, particularly in its English translation, one gets the impression that Wittgenstein is describing basic *propositions* – indeed, what have been called (following OC 341) 'hinge *propositions*'. And yet, whatever else it is that we shall find lying at bedrock according to Wittgenstein, 'it is *not* certain *propositions* striking us … as true' (OC 204; my emphasis). In this chapter, we shall examine the meaning the term 'proposition' has for Wittgenstein, and conclude that what have been called 'hinge propositions' are not propositions at all.

Satz: sentence and proposition

Wittgenstein did not think it possible to give a general definition for the word: 'proposition' (MWL 55; AWL 20). As G.E. Moore recalls (MWL 55–9), Wittgenstein used the word 'proposition' to refer not only to empirical propositions (or descriptions or hypotheses), but also to mathematical equations, expressions of grammatical rules (MWL 60), and first-person psychological expressions (MWL 59). As Moore notes:

> … he seemed to me often to use the words 'proposition' and 'sentence' as if they meant the same, perhaps partly because the German word 'Satz' may be properly used for either; and therefore often talked as if sentences could *be* 'true'. (MWL 61)

Though his native German can certainly partly explain Wittgenstein's liberal usage of the term 'proposition' throughout his works, the explanation

also lies in the fact that, in some cases, Wittgenstein is still *in the process* of determining whether a certain kind of statement is a proposition or not (e.g. OC 167). But his overall liberality with the term can easily be exaggerated when one considers that it is not Wittgenstein, but his translators who are more often than not responsible for its appearance in his works. When speaking or writing in English,[1] Wittgenstein uses the term in three ways:

1. the German way: as if it were interchangeable with 'sentence';
2. the English way: in its philosophically technical usage: as an abstract entity *à la Frege*; as a Fregean 'thought';[2] the sense of a sentence;
3. as 'statement'; that is: to refer to what is stated or said without the connotation that this is an abstract entity.

In his specialized usage of the term (2), Wittgenstein, we shall see, is from first to last unequivocal about whether a proposition is essentially bipolar, that is to say, something which can be true *and* can be false. This of course precludes his considering any string of words which is not susceptible of falsity from being a 'proposition' in the narrow or technical sense of the word. In *On Certainty*, when Wittgenstein wants to say that a string of words is a proposition in the technical sense, he usually uses the term *Erfahrungssatz*; otherwise, he uses the word *Satz*. Often, however, his translators render *Satz* as 'proposition', even where it cannot technically be a 'proposition' that Wittgenstein is talking about. The most unfortunate occurrence of this is at OC 341:

> That is to say, the *questions* that we raise and our *doubts* depend on the fact that some propositions[3] [*Sätze*] are exempt from doubt, are as it were like hinges on which those turn.

This translation is responsible for the misleading, indeed erroneous expression: 'hinge propositions'. Insofar as they are said to be 'exempt from doubt', these hinge-*Sätze cannot*, on Wittgenstein's bipolar view of the proposition, be hinge *propositions*. But we have now to delineate Wittgenstein's view of what, strictly speaking *is* a proposition.

Propositions, strictly speaking

What is a proposition? The question was to engage Wittgenstein from the *Notebooks* to *On Certainty*.[4] Wittgenstein came to regard the concept of a proposition as a family resemblance concept under which disparate members could be accommodated:

> I shall not try to give a general definition of 'proposition', as it is impossible to do so. This is no more possible than it is to give a definition of the word 'game'. (AWL 20)

Indeed, in *On Certainty*, his very last work, he still seems to think that this is the case, or at least that the concept of proposition does not have sharp boundaries:

> Here one must, I believe, remember that the concept 'proposition' [*Satz*] itself is not a sharp one. (OC 320)

And yet even as he continues to regard the concept of a proposition as a family resemblance concept having, like those of 'game' or 'joke', a 'rainbow of meanings' (MWL 107), asserting that '[i]t is more or less arbitrary what we call a "proposition" ' (MWL 55), Wittgenstein never abandons his initial consideration of the proposition as something which is essentially contingent and descriptive. This does not betray any inconsistency: on the one hand, it is the nonspecialized use of the concept Wittgenstein refuses to restrict; on the other, the specialized use he never deviates from.

Bipolarity: a condition of propositionality

> … what is said … is not true or false *because* it is a statement, but rather it is a statement because it *can* be true or false, that is because both possibilities lie within the game.
>
> (PLP 288)

For G.H. von Wright 'the idea of Bi-polarity' is one of the 'two features which can be said to pervade the whole of Wittgenstein's philosophy'[5] (1982, 174); Anthony Kenny insists that Wittgenstein's meditations on the proposition were persistently governed by the idea that bipolarity was definitive of it (1973, 229) and Newton Garver affirms that it is a 'constant in Wittgenstein's work from beginning to end, that a proposition makes sense if and only if its negation makes sense' (1996, 148–9). For Wittgenstein, to be a proposition is to be bipolar; that is, to be susceptible of truth *and* falsity. From the first, Wittgenstein's technical concept of the proposition is internally related to bipolarity: 'In order for a proposition [*Satz*] to be capable of being true it must also be capable of being false' (NB 55); '*Any proposition* [*Satz*] can be negated' (NB 21); 'A proposition [*Satz*] must restrict reality to two alternatives' (4.023) and to nothing less, that is not to one or the other absolutely. One must be able to conceive of a proposition's content and of the negation of its content; it must be capable of being true *and* of being false – both possibilities must lie within the game. In the thirties, Wittgenstein still upholds bipolarity: 'In logic we talk of a proposition as that which is true or false, or as that which can be negated' (AWL 101); ' "A proposition [*Satz*] is whatever can be true or false" means the same as "a proposition [*Satz*] is whatever can be denied" ' (PG 123); 'it is a part of the nature of *what we call propositions* [*Satz*] that they must be capable of being negated' (PG 376). The ruling out of the possibility of falsity amounts to the

ruling out of propositionality: 'There is no such proposition as "Red is darker than pink", *because* there is no proposition that negates it' (AWL 208; my emphasis). In other words, so-called analytic and synthetic a priori propositions are not propositions.

The claim that propositions are essentially bipolar cannot be consistent with accommodating rules, tautologies or anything else which is *necessarily* true within the propositional fold. This is why Peter Hacker and H.-J. Glock insist that Wittgenstein's discussion of 'hinge *propositions*' implies – since these do not admit of falsity – that he must have given up bipolarity as definitive of propositionality.[6] Indeed, Hacker contends that Wittgenstein 'was later [after the *Tractatus*] to jettison' 'the claim that bipolarity is the essence of the proposition' (1996, 35):[7]

> It was … mistaken to suppose that bipolarity is the essence of the proposition, an essence which mirrors the metaphysical nature of facts, namely, that it is of their essence that they either obtain or fail to obtain. (1996, 80)

I have not found that Hacker anywhere gives arguments for his claim. However, because there is, in *The Principles of Linguistic Philosophy* (PLP), a discussion of the nature of the proposition which includes a formulation of bivalence – 'A proposition is what can be true or false' (288) – I shall briefly consider it.[8]

A look at the pertinent sections[9] makes clear that though the discussion was supposed to go towards *extending* the concept of proposition, the upshot is rather the opposite: we end up with two legitimate types of propositions: 'descriptions' and 'hypotheses', legitimate in that they can be negated; and two usurpers, 'rules' and 'tautologies' (PLP 299), illegitimate in that they cannot be negated – indeed, with 'pseudo-propositions' and 'degenerate cases of propositions'. It seems then that no discernible departure is made from the *Tractatus* about the bipolar nature of the proposition, and the discussion leans rather towards justifying – by appealing to *misleading appearance* – the tendency to attribute propositionality to 'very different forms related only by haphazard similarities' (PLP 298). It is only 'language'[10] that 'links together' such 'grammatically different formations in a kind of unity' (PLP 298). And indeed, PLP exhibits the persistent, underlying assurance of the necessarily bipolar nature of the proposition:

> If one forbade the formation of false propositions, the remainder would not consist of true ones, but of no propositions at all. Cancelling out one side of this contrast would deprive the other one of its meaning. (PLP 292)

The notion of 'misleading appearance' is deployed to alert us to the danger of succumbing to the temptation of treating something as a proposition

because it has the *look* or the *ring* of one:

> A convention as to the use of language often sounds like a proposition, and this may give rise to a number of obscurities. 'A round square is impossible', 'Time flows', 'Red and green exclude each other' – all these sound like propositions. In such cases it is always advisable to ask, is it possible to negate such an expression? One should make a trial, to see whether the expression can be used in the truth–false calculus, and that will show whether or not it is a proposition. (PLP 289)

The nonpropositionality of grammatical 'propositions'

> Above all, our grammar is lacking in perspicuity.
>
> (P 177)

In the course of the same lectures, G.E. Moore reports Wittgenstein as asserting both that a proposition 'has a rainbow of meanings' (MWL 107) and, of the 'kind of "proposition" ' that has traditionally been called ' "necessary", as opposed to "contingent" ', such as 'mathematical propositions',

> … he sometimes said that they are not propositions at all … They are propositions of which the negation would be said to be, not merely false, but 'impossible', 'unimaginable', 'unthinkable' (expressions which [Wittgenstein] himself often used in speaking of them). They include not only the propositions of pure Mathematics, but also those of Deductive Logic, certain propositions which would usually be said to be propositions about colours, and an immense number of others. (MWL 60)

Moore reports Wittgenstein as saying that ' "Rules of deduction are analogous to the fixing of a unit of length", and (taking "3 + 3 = 6" as an instance of a rule of deduction)', that ' "3 + 3 = 6" is a rule as to the way we are going to talk … it is a preparation for a description, just as fixing a unit of length is a preparation for measuring' (MWL 72). The comparison of the mathematical 'proposition' to a 'grammatical rule' precludes its being true or false:

> [Wittgenstein] actually introduced his comparison between rules of deduction and the fixing of a unit of length by saying: 'The statement that rules of deduction are neither true nor false is apt to give an uncomfortable feeling.' It appeared, therefore, as if he thought that this statement that they are neither true nor false followed from the statement that they are arbitrary, and that the comparison of them with the fixing of a unit of length would tend to remove this uncomfortable feeling, *i.e.* to make you see that they really are neither true nor false.
>
> … And it certainly does give me a very uncomfortable feeling to be told that '3 + 3 = 6' is neither true nor false. (MWL 73)

To be told that grammatical rules such as 'Red is a colour' or '3 + 3 = 6' are neither 'true' nor 'false' can be grating on the ear. And Moore admits succumbing to this discomfort. Old habits die hard. By the end of the lecture, Moore was still not converted: 'Wittgenstein has not succeeded in removing the "uncomfortable feeling" which it gives me to be told that "3 + 3 = 6" and "($p \supset q \,.\, p$) entails q" are neither true nor false' (MWL 81).

However Moore may have taken Wittgenstein's 'puzzling assertion that 3 + 3 = 6 (and *all* rules of deduction, similarly) is neither true nor false' (MWL 80), there is no ambiguity about Wittgenstein's 'declaration' and 'insistence' that mathematical 'propositions' are 'rules', indeed 'rules of grammar' (MWL 79) and that these 'rules' are 'neither true nor false' (MWL 62, 73). And this cannot be dismissed as 'early Wittgenstein'. He is still making the same claim in the *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*:

> There must be something wrong in our idea of the truth and falsity of our arithmetical propositions [*Sätze*]. (RFM, p. 90)

It is important to underline that Wittgenstein does not only attribute nonpropositionality to mathematical 'propositions' but, as he makes clear in the AWL passage above, and it is worth repeating, to any 'proposition' of which the negation would be said to be, not merely false, but 'impossible', 'unimaginable', 'unthinkable' and these

> … include not only the propositions of pure Mathematics, but also those of Deductive Logic, certain propositions which would usually be said to be propositions about colours, and an immense number of others. (MWL 60)

In fact, nonpropositionality is attributed to any string of words that constitutes a rule or a norm:

> Some sentences are propositions, and other sentences look like propositions and are not. … *Sentences which themselves state conventions seem not to be propositions*. (AWL 65; my emphasis)

Statements of conventions are not propositions, but neither is any sentence that *seems* to report something, but is in fact not capable of falsity:

> Examine the sentence: 'There is something there', referring to the visual sensation I'm now having.
>
> Aren't we inclined to think that this is a statement making sense and being true? And on the other hand, isn't it a pseudo-statement? (LPE 271)

Many so-called 'statements' or 'propositions' are divested of their propositional status inasmuch as their nature is similar to propositions of mathematics; that is, inasmuch as they are not empirically *derived*, and are therefore not candidates for doubt, verification or falsification.[11]

The timelessness of rules: grammatical 'propositions' versus empirical propositions

> That statement can be used in a temporal or in a (to use a misleading phrase) timeless way.
>
> (LFM 35)

Throughout the Ambrose lectures, Wittgenstein urges us not to regard 'norms of expression that we ourselves have fixed' as a priori laws of nature (AWL 16).[12] So that when he goes on to speak of some sentences as 'timeless',[13] he does not intend to associate them with *ideal* truths, but means, rather, to dissociate them from *temporal* truths. The sentence 'The pentagon has 5 outer vertices' is *timeless*, not in the sense that it describes the eternal, Platonic nature of pentagons, but in the sense that it is *atemporal, without tense*:

> Let us compare: 'The pentagram has 5 outer vertices' and 'My hand has 5 fingers'. These are enormously different, although they sound alike. Their grammars differ in a way that could be described in terms of ordinary English grammar: the first has *no tenses*, whereas one can say of a hand that it *has had* 5 fingers. The proposition which answers the question 'How many?' is in the first case timeless … (AWL 172)

Wittgenstein calls norms of expression 'timeless' because he wants to contrast them with temporal or *empirical* propositions; that is: with statements that *are* the time-linked result of investigation, ratiocination, demonstration or proof. This is put clearly in RFM:

> When we say: 'This proposition [*Satz*] follows from that one' here again 'to follow' is being used *non-temporally* [*unzeitlich*]. (And this shows that the proposition [*Satz*] does not express the result of an experiment.) (RFM, p. 75)

Grammatical 'propositions' belong neither to the empirical world, nor to the ideal realm. Here, Wittgenstein is trying to steer us clear from believing that in assimilating a mathematical or grammatical rule, we are 'learning *by experience* a timeless truth' (AWL 176; my emphasis):

> … the equation $2 + 2 = 4$ is timeless. That 4 consists of 2 and 2 in the sense of '$2 + 2 = 4$' cannot be *seen*. There is no phenomenon of seeing that a proposition of grammar holds. (AWL 181)

We did not *come* to the conclusion that $2 + 2 = 4$ with time or through experience. Wittgenstein's reference to the *timelessness* of grammatical or mathematical 'propositions' is also a way of asserting their *autonomy* from experience: 'we cannot say that it was through experience we were made aware of an extra application of grammar' (PG 255); 'There is no experience of something necessarily happening' (AWL 15).

Grammatical 'propositions' are not begotten in the course or progression of time but are conventions that we impose on ourselves: *ready-to-use* rules. The rules of mathematical and verbal languages are as ungrounded, arbitrary or unreasoned as those of chess. Not hypotheses whose truth or falsity needs be determined, but *stipulations* or *conditions* that must be unquestioningly accepted if one is to play the game:

> 'If you hit the target anywhere within the circle, you have won.'
> 'I think you will hit the target somewhere within the circle.'
>
> Someone might ask about the first proposition: how do you know? Have you tried *all* possible places? And the answer would have to be: that isn't a proposition [*Satz*] at all, it is a general *stipulation* [*Festzetzung*]. (PG 252)

The insistence in the Ambrose Lectures that mathematical and grammatical 'propositions' are 'timeless', far from inviting a Platonic gloss, must be taken to mean that they are nontemporal rules and not time-linked hypotheses. Rules, as we have seen in the section, 'The nonpropositionality of grammatical "propositions" ' in Chapter 2, are not true or false, but only practical or impractical:

> We can draw the distinction between hypothesis and grammatical rule by means of the words 'true' or 'false' on the one hand, and 'practical' and 'impractical' on the other. The words 'practical' and 'impractical' characterize rules. *A rule is not true or false*. (AWL 70, my emphasis)

The suggestion, then, that 'Red is a colour' is a *true* grammatical *proposition* is unacceptable on two counts: (1) it expresses a rule and a rule is neither true nor false, and (2) the expression of a rule is not a proposition because there is no proposition that negates it, nothing to be negated, and so it is not, strictly speaking, a proposition.

Peter Hacker's objection

Making bipolarity an essential feature of the proposition entails the exclusion of rules from the propositional realm, and therefore from the realm of the true and the false. And this seems as discomforting for Peter Hacker as it was for Moore. Though he admits that a grammatical *proposition* is 'best

viewed … as a rule' (1989, 198), Hacker seems to think that nothing is wrong with our idea of necessarily true propositions (*true* arithmetical, or more generally grammatical, *propositions*):

> Surely it is *true* that 2 + 3 = 5? Indeed it is; that is what is called a true proposition of arithmetic. (1989, 207n)

If bipolarity is definitive of the proposition, rules can only be illegitimate pseudopropositions. But Hacker rejects this, and would rather we go on speaking of 'true propositions of arithmetic' than of 'illegitimate pseudo-propositions of arithmetic' (1989, 189). For a *rule* to be a *proposition*, bipolarity must be rejected as definitive of propositions, and Hacker has no qualms about rejecting bipolarity for some propositions. But why does he contend it was Wittgenstein's doing?

> True enough, over a very important range, empirical propositions are bipolar. On the other hand, mathematical propositions are not. And, as [Wittgenstein] realized towards the end of his life, propositions of our 'world-picture', such as 'the world has existed for a long time', are not bipolar either. Within the category of empirical propositions there are deep and important logical differences with ramifying philosophical consequences. Although in the very early 1930s he was inclined to claim that ethical and aesthetic sentences do not express genuine propositions, it is, I think, doubtful whether he would have expressed himself thus later. The concept of a proposition is a *family resemblance concept*. It is linked together by intermediate cases, overlapping similarities which do *not* run through the totality. (1989, 133)
>
> … bipolarity was an important grammatical insight. Nevertheless, as Wittgenstein later realized, it requires qualification. The concept of a proposition is a family-resemblance concept. Bipolarity characterises one important member of the family, but not all. It is not even true that all empirical propositions are bipolar, since many propositions of our *Weltbild*[14] are not. (1996a, 34n)

H.-J. Glock echoes Hacker's view of Wittgenstein's position. He acknowledges that Wittgenstein 'insisted on bipolarity rather than bivalence, and treated this as an essential condition of a proposition's ability to represent reality' (1996, 64), but contends that Wittgenstein 'later rejected the principle of bipolarity as part of a "mythology of symbolism" '. Glock offers no substantiation for this,[15] rather conceding that 'the dogmatic [bipolarity] principle soldiers on in some parts of his later work' (1996, 65), but adding:

> Wittgenstein continued to hold that something like bipolarity defines the notion of a proposition … However, in other passages Wittgenstein

> realized that there is no warrant for restricting the notion of a proposition to bipolar descriptions of possible states of affairs. It is legitimate to speak of necessary *propositions* in mathematics and logic, as long as one keeps in mind the differences between them and empirical propositions. Not even all empirical propositions fit the narrow picture: the *Weltbild* propositions of *On Certainty* could not simply turn out to be false. (1996, 318; first emphasis mine)

That the *Weltbild* propositions of *On Certainty* cannot turn out to be false, as Glock recognizes; or that they are not bipolar, as Baker and Hacker claim, does not imply that Wittgenstein no longer held a bipolar view of the proposition, but that *they are not propositions at all* – as Wittgenstein often, though perhaps too subtly, tells us in *On Certainty*:

> Giving grounds, … justifying the evidence, comes to an end; – but the end is not certain propositions' [*Sätze*] striking us immediately as true, i.e. it is not a kind of *seeing* on our part; it is our *acting*, which lies at the bottom of the language-game. (OC 204)
>
> If the true is what is grounded, then the ground is not *true*, nor yet false. (OC 205)

The hinge 'propositions' of *On Certainty* are no evidence for Wittgenstein's abandoning bipolarity; it is rather his continuing adherence to the essential bipolarity of propositions that allowed him to realize that *Weltbild* or Moore-type 'propositions' are not propositions at all. We shall see that they are grammatical rules (cf. section, '*Grammatical*: hinges are rules of grammar,') not empirical propositions' in Chapter 4. Baker and Hacker repeatedly point to our mistaking grammatical 'propositions' for *empirical* propositions, statements about reality, but they fail to see that the case is precisely the same with *hinge* or *Weltbild* 'propositions': they also 'have the form of empirical propositions [*Erfahrungssätze*]' (OC 308), *look like* statements about reality, but are not:[16]

> … the grammatical constructions we call empirical propositions [*Erfahrungssätze*] … have a particular application, a particular use. And a construction may have a superficial resemblance to such an empirical proposition [*Erfahrungssatz*] and play a somewhat similar role in a calculus without having an analogous application; and if it hasn't we won't be inclined to call it a proposition [*Satz*]. (PG 127)

Using propositions will remain for Wittgenstein a matter of using language to *describe*; when language is used to express or regulate, it is not propositional. Wittgenstein will never give up his Tractarian conviction that all genuine propositions are factual, and that whatever is not susceptible of

falsity is not a proposition:

> ' "I have consciousness" – that is a statement about which no doubt is possible.' Why should that not say the same as: ' "I have consciousness" is not a proposition [*Satz*]'? (Z 401)

On Wittgenstein's view, only what is susceptible of doubt can be expressed by propositions. So that when Wittgenstein writes that '… no such proposition as "There are physical objects" can be formulated' (OC 36), he means that the sentence: 'There are physical objects' cannot be a proposition.[17] But he also means that the sentence: 'There are physical objects' cannot be *said*. In the same way that 'There are humans who see' cannot be *said* (cf. RC III, 331; I, 86).

Saying versus speaking

In 1919, Wittgenstein wrote to Russell:

> … my main contention, to which the whole business of logical propositions is only a corollary … is the theory of what can be expressed (gesagt) by propositions – i.e. by language (and which comes to the same, what can be *thought*); and what cannot be expressed by propositions, but only shown (gezeigt); which I believe is the cardinal problem of philosophy. (CL 124)

It will also be one of the main contentions of *On Certainty*, where Wittgenstein is intent on telling Moore that he cannot *say* what he thought he had said, and indeed proved: '… no such proposition as "There are physical objects" can be formulated' (OC 36). *Sayability* is an important and often specialized term for Wittgenstein. Indeed, I suggest that from the *Tractatus* to *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein considers *saying*, and *not only meaning*, as internally related to *use*.[18] I can here give only a brief defence of this claim.

To say that 'the meaning of a word is its use in the language' (PI 43) – or, more simply, that meaning is use – is to say that *what a word or string of words means is conditioned by rules and is dependent on the context or circumstances in which the word or words are pronounced*; but it is also to say that for a word or string of words to be meaningful, it must have *a* use; that is, a function or a point[19] in the language-game in which it is pronounced; that is, it cannot be *idle*. So that an identical sentence can be meaningful or meaningless depending on whether or not it does some work in the language-game in which it is formulated. If I say: 'I am here' to inform someone who is in another room and cannot see that I've arrived, the sentence has a point; if I say it to someone who is sitting next to me at the Q bar in Saigon, and who can see me clearly, to express my satisfaction that after all the years of wanting to visit Vietnam, I have finally made it, it also has

a point; but if I say it in an unmotivated or undetermined way, out of the blue, or 'out of all context', as Wittgenstein puts it (OC 349, 350, 465) to someone who is standing next to me and can see me clearly, the sentence is meaningless – that is; it has no use (does no work) and *says* nothing:

> … the words 'I am here' have a meaning only in certain contexts, and not when I say them to someone who is sitting in front of me and sees me clearly … (OC 548)

So that when Wittgenstein writes that '… no such proposition as "There are physical objects" can be formulated' (OC 36), he does not mean that the sentence cannot be pronounced. But to pronounce or voice something is not always to *say* anything.

Technically, for Wittgenstein, not everything that is *spoken* is *said*. On his view, to pronounce well-formed sentences is not necessarily to *say* anything. Any word or concatenation of words can be *spoken*, but only *meaningful* words or concatenation of words can be *said* (gesagt). Although Wittgenstein does not make a general distinction between saying and speaking, he does *explicitly* exclude some (spoken or written) sentences from the possibility of being *said*:

> So one cannot say, for example, 'There are objects', as one might say, 'There are books.' (TLP 4.1272)
>
> Certainly it makes no sense to say that the colour red is torn up or pounded to bits. (PI 57)
>
> The truth is: it makes sense to say about other people that they doubt whether I am in pain; but not to say it about myself. (PI 246)
>
> … to say one knows one has a pain means nothing. (OC 504)

And he also *explicitly* excludes the possibility of uttering[20] some sentences *in certain contexts*:

> It is queer: if I say, without any special occasion, 'I know' – for example, 'I know that I am now sitting in a chair', this statement seems to me unjustified and presumptuous. (OC 553)

Moreover, Wittgenstein *implicitly* excludes some sentences from the possibility of being *said* or of being used to *say* something in some contexts: (a) by asking the question whether it makes sense to *say* such-and-such (e.g. RC I, 86; OC 468), or (b) by stating that it is not clear what it would mean to *say* such-and-such, (e.g. RC III, 331; OC 237, 350, 433). Although the distinction between saying and speaking is implied in Wittgenstein's

(explicit and implicit) exclusion of some *spoken* (or *written*) sentences from the possibility of being *said*, I have not found that he explicitly makes that distinction (in these, or any specific, terms).[21] Yet in order to highlight Wittgenstein's important exclusion of some sentences from the possibility of being technically *said*, I believe we should introduce a dichotomy between 'saying' and 'speaking' – where 'speaking' might inconsequentially be replaced by 'voicing', 'articulating' or 'pronouncing'.

What is *sayable*, what it makes sense to *say*, is what has a use in a language-game. *Sayability* and *use/sense*[22] are internally linked. On this point, the later Wittgenstein differs from 'the author of the *Tractatus*' only in that his coming to realize the multiplicity of the uses of language (PI 23) automatically prompts an extension of the scope of the sayable. For the author of the *Tractatus*, sense was exclusive to (empirical) propositions: 'only propositions have sense' (TLP 3.3),[23] and all that can be *said* are the propositions of natural science (TLP 6.53). But when *use/sense* is no longer limited to empirical propositions, neither then is sayability. So that the later Wittgenstein's view of what has sense encompasses any word or string of words that has a use within a language-game, regardless of whether or not it constitutes a proposition. Spontaneous utterances, though they do not express propositions, have sense. It is important to stress, then, that the later Wittgenstein no longer equates propositionality with sense or with sayability; but he does retain his Tractarian view that only what has sense is (technically) sayable.

Although the scope of the sayable increases in the later Wittgenstein, what remains unchanged throughout his philosophizing is the idea that what can be *said* is what does not *go without saying* as explained in the section, '*Ineffability*: hinges go without saying' in Chapter 4. That is, what can be *said* are (strings of) words that do some work *in a language-game* – that are *not idle*, but have a *use* or a *point* – whether that work be descriptive or expressive.[24] And of course, *doing some work* can include repetition and stating the obvious, for emphasis, irony, and so on. What, on the other hand, does no work within a language-game *does not bear saying*. So that although grammatical rules do some work, it is not work *within* the game; but work *supportive* of the game. They can therefore not be *said* (within the flow of the language-game), though they can be voiced outside the game (e.g. in order to instruct someone on the rules of the game).[25] What *cannot be said*, therefore, is

(a) *that which has no sense*, either because it has not been assigned one (e.g. 'Ab sur ah'), or because it violates sense – that is, it uses a combination of words which transgresses the sense of words already in circulation[26] (e.g. 'Red is lighter than pink');
(b) *that which makes sense possible* (e.g. 'Red is darker than pink' and all grammatical rules), and therefore does not itself *make sense*.[27]

The problem is that the *ineffable* – that which cannot be *said* – can nevertheless be *spoken*; that is: articulated in *sentences* (such as those expressing grammatical rules). This is bound to cause confusion. It is for the philosopher here to be perspicacious and distinguish sentences that constitute propositions or expressions, from sentences that do not.[28] The perspicacity required is not ocular; for strings of words can *look* identical and yet have differing statuses. Indeed, the very same sentence can, in different contexts or uses, be *said* or only *spoken*. *Speaking* is, for example,

(a) articulating (strings of) words that are devoid of use in the language-game in which they are articulated (e.g. 'I am here', pronounced in the middle of a conversation to someone sitting in front of me who can see me clearly); or that have no recognizable use in any language-game (e.g. 'Ab sur ah');
(b) articulating sentences as formulations of rules of grammar, or as objects of conceptual scrutiny (e.g. 'I am here', proffered as the translation of the French sentence: 'Je suis là' in a language class, or pronounced by a philosopher examining the categorial status of basic beliefs).

I can *formulate* (speak) grammatical rules (in order to transmit them to a child or foreign speaker; or, as a philosopher, for conceptual investigation), but I cannot *say* them (that is: articulate them in a language-game as if they were informative or descriptive propositions). To say, then, that something is *unsayable* or *ineffable* (in Wittgenstein's technical sense) is not to say that it cannot be *spoken*. We can use words; indeed, sentences; indeed, perfectly well-formed sentences, and yet not be *saying* anything; not be making sense. It is crucial, if we are to understand Wittgenstein's conceptual clarifications as consistent,[29] that we not conflate these two ways of articulating sentences: *saying* versus *speaking*. And, as we shall see in the section, 'Hinges as *nonsense*' in Chapter 4, what cannot be *said* is nonsense – so that rules of grammar are, on Wittgenstein's view, as nonsensical as their violations.

SAYING		**SPEAKING**
expressing	*uttering expressing*[31]	*voicing pronouncing*[32]
propositions[33]	spontaneous utterances	tautologies rules of grammar basic (or hinge) beliefs
+ bipolar + sense + descriptive	– truth value + sense + expressive	– truth value – sense + regulative

Chart 2.1 Saying versus speaking

As shown in Chart 2.1, the distinction between saying and speaking is correlative to distinct uses of language. It is, moreover, interesting to note that the three modes of articulation depicted below correspond to the tripartite division of the functions of language envisaged by Karl Bühler (1934), according to which, some words are used to *describe*, others to *express* and others to *steer* (though Bühler speaks of 'representation' rather than 'description').[30] These were the uses of language that most occupied Wittgenstein.

Rules (Tractarian, or (later) grammatical, 'propositions') are *ineffable*; that is: they can be *voiced*, but (technically) not *said*. They cannot be said *in* the language-game, for they support the language-game. They are its ladder or its scaffolding. To attempt to say the unsayable is what we do, for example, when we proffer a sentence that formulates a grammatical rule (e.g. 'There are objects') as if it were depicting a state of affairs, as if it were a falsifiable proposition (4.1272). What we cannot *say*, we must be quiet about.[34] Saying it implies that it does not *go without saying*. For Wittgenstein, from the *Tractatus* to *On Certainty*, the logical does not bear saying: '… one cannot say, for example, "There are objects", as one might say, "There are books" ' (TLP 4.1272); and '… to say …"There are external objects is nonsense" ' (OC 37).

Throughout his early and late works, Wittgenstein continually toys with the pseudo-propositionality or nonpropositionality of some 'propositions', questions the propriety of calling certain concatenations of words 'propositions', and outrightly denounces it in the case of mathematical and grammatical 'propositions', of some psychological 'propositions' and of hinge 'propositions'. In each case, he comes to the *explicitly stated* conclusion that the candidates are *not propositions at all*.[35] The enquiry into what Wittgenstein took to be a proposition and what he begrudged that status is not a mere exegetical exercise. Wittgenstein's sporadically unequivocal assertions about the nonpropositionality of some strings of words go hand in hand with his coming to see that some of what seem to be either empirical or epistemic claims are not what they seem to be. Nonpropositional strings of words are variously distinguished from propositional ones by their foundational, regulative, primitive or expressive statuses; generally, all linked to deed, rather than word.

Saying versus showing

According to Cora Diamond, although the distinction between what can be said and what can only be shown is central to the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein did not himself endorse this distinction (1984–85, 180). And according to Peter Hacker, Wittgenstein abandoned the *Tractatus* distinction between what can be said and what cannot be said but only shown (2000, 369). I disagree with both Diamond and Hacker. The view that there is a distinction between what can be said and what can only be shown *is* Wittgenstein's

view, and he *does* maintain it throughout his philosophical career. Indeed, it is particularly salient in *On Certainty*. As we shall see in the section, 'Objective certainty as a silent or ineffable certainty' in Chapter 3, our objective certainty is not sayable; it can only *show* itself *in* what we say and do:

> 'I know all that.'[36] And *that will come out in the way I act and in the way I speak* about the things in question. (OC 395; my emphasis)
>
> My life shews that I know or am certain that there is a chair over there, or a door, and so on. – I tell a friend e.g. 'Take that chair over there', 'Shut the door', etc. etc. (OC 7)

As Jerry Gill writes:

> … Wittgenstein's main contention in *On Certainty* is that the character of epistemological bedrock can only be *displayed* or allowed to *show itself*; every attempt to doubt it or justify it becomes entangled in self-stultifying confusion. (1974, 282)

There is a crucial difference between articulating a sentence *as* a certainty – which is what G.E. Moore pointlessly does when he pronounces the words: 'Here is a hand' – and *showing* our certainty about 'This is a hand' *in the way we act and speak about this hand* (e.g. in our saying: 'Oh, I've dirtied my hands again', or in our playing the piano. We will see, in Chapter 3, that only the latter can count as *occurrences* of objective certainty; that *showing* is the *only mode of occurrence* of our objective certainty. Moore's articulation of the sentence: 'Here is a hand' is not an occurrence of certainty, but only a formulation of it. Occurrences of objective certainty can only be *shown*, not *said*. Here, then, we have an instance of the *saying/showing* distinction – which Wittgenstein believed, as he wrote to Russell, was 'the cardinal problem of philosophy', and it should not be confused or conflated with the *saying/speaking* distinction I have made in the previous section. Hinge beliefs, though they cannot, *qua hinge beliefs*, be *said*, can be spoken. Far from abandoning the saying/showing distinction, Wittgenstein retains it to the very end, and indeed it constitutes a crucial continuity in his work – the only qualification being that gradually the *showing* is also referred to as an *acting*. And this is indicative of the growing pragmatism in Wittgenstein which finds its culmination in *On Certainty* (cf. section, 'Logic in action' in Chapter 8).

Like many of the pseudo-propositions of the *Tractatus*, the apparently empirical propositions of *On Certainty* are in fact grammatical rules,[37] and their correct analysis would require that 'we destroy the outward similarity' between these propositions and experiential ones (BB 55). Of course, this drastic option is not available to the philosopher who must leave ordinary language as it is, but she can and should make a perspicuous presentation of it to other philosophers.

Calling a spade a spade: philosophical versus ordinary language

> What I am aiming at is also found in the difference between the casual observation 'I know that that's a …', as it might be used in ordinary life, and the same utterance when a philosopher makes it. (OC 406)

In ordinary language, we might say of '2 + 3 = 5' that it is true and of '2 + 3 = 6' that it is false. It is on these grounds, and in deference to Wittgenstein's injunction not to interfere with the actual use of language, that Baker and Hacker adopt a *laissez-faire* policy:

> We do, of course, say of innumerable necessary propositions that they are true … . Wittgenstein did not deny this platitude; nor did he try to persuade us to stop saying this. For 'philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language. … It leaves everything as it is' (PI 124). (1992, 276)

But Baker and Hacker are not warranted in appealing to Wittgenstein for support. There is a difference between interfering with 'the actual use of language' – that is, with *ordinary* language – and clarifying the use of *philosophical* language. Wittgenstein urges that we not interfere with ordinary language, not that we do nothing, *as philosophers*, to clarify our grammar. What is perfectly in order as it is and must be left alone in ordinary language, must incur any needed modification in philosophical language. Indeed, here is Wittgenstein correcting Moore's and our grammar of 'I know':

> For when Moore says 'I know that that's …' I want to reply 'you don't *know* anything!' – and yet I would not say that to anyone who was speaking without philosophical intention. That is, I feel (rightly?) that these two mean to say something different. (OC 407)

Glock is wrong to suggest that it is legitimate to go on speaking of necessary *propositions* as long as we *keep in mind* the differences between these and empirical propositions because, for one thing: 'An unsuitable means of expression is a sure means of remaining in a state of confusion. It as it were, bars the way out' (PI 339); but also because, as Hacker himself acknowledges, the differences are 'prodigious'. So that Hacker's reluctance to give up calling mathematical equations or expressions of rules 'propositions' and 'true' forces him to envisage a categorial distinction as if it were a faint family resemblance:

> *Proposition* is a family resemblance concept and there are prodigious differences between propositions of different kinds, differences reflected

> in what it means to say that such and such is true. The truth of a proposition in mathematics is no more akin to the truth of an empirical proposition than a chess queen is akin to a queen. (1989, 170)

We are dealing here with differences *in kind*, and family resemblance is not a *carte blanche* for grouping *prodigiously* different uses under the same denomination. Attempting to group such incompatible candidates as rules of grammar and empirical propositions under the same banner leads to category mistakes.

There is no question here of reinventing language, but no question either of a spectator role for the philosopher:

> The danger sets in when we notice that the old model is not sufficient but then we don't change it. (P 199)
>
> The philosophical problem is an awareness of disorder in our concepts, and can be solved by ordering them. (P 181)

To champion Wittgenstein's rearrangement of the pictures that hold us captive, it is not enough to point to it; we must *use* it. And go on rearranging, where Wittgenstein has left off. In 'Truth', J.L. Austin writes:

> Recently, it has come to be realized that many utterances which have been taken to be statements (merely because they are not, on grounds of grammatical form, to be classed as commands, questions, &c.) are not in fact descriptive, nor susceptible of being true or false. When is a statement not a statement? When it is a formula in a calculus: when it is a performatory utterance: when it is a value-judgement: when it is a definition: when it is part of a work of fiction – there are many such suggested answers. It is simply not the business of such utterances to 'correspond to the facts' …
>
> It is a matter for decision how far we should continue to call such masqueraders 'statements' at all, and how widely we should be prepared to extend the uses of 'true' and 'false' in 'different senses'. My own feeling is that it is better, when once a masquerader has been unmasked, *not* to call it a statement and *not* to say it is true or false.[38] In ordinary life we should not call most of them statements at all, though philosophers and grammarians may have come to do so (or rather, have lumped them all together under the term of art 'proposition'). (1950, 131)

What has the look or the ring of a proposition is not always one. So why, in philosophical circles, go on calling it one? Why not acknowledge, mark the difference and avoid further confusion? Wittgenstein's comparison of our *Weltbild* or hinge 'propositions' to rules (OC 95) is consistent with his

other pronouncements about hinge 'propositions': that they are logically indubitable, nonempirical, foundational and nonpropositional. These – the features of hinge 'propositions' – will be the subject of Chapter 4. I will, however, in keeping with my appeal to call a spade a spade, no longer refer to hinge 'propositions', but simply to *hinges*. But before we scrutinize the features of hinges, or objective certainties, we must distinguish them conceptually from the assurance whose occurrences they are: objective certainty. The next chapter will attempt to iron out the seeming inconsistencies in Wittgenstein's use of multifarious images, terms and concepts so as to stretch a smooth canvas upon which an exposition of his conceptual elucidations can then be made.

3
Objective Certainty and Objective Certainties

> But why am I so certain that this is my hand? Doesn't the whole language-game rest on this kind of certainty?
>
> (OC 446)

The descriptions of objective certainty

In his struggle to uncover the nature of our basic beliefs, Wittgenstein refers to them in many different ways in *On Certainty*: he thinks of them as propositions (OC 415), as rules (OC 95), as forming a picture (OC 94) and as ways of acting (OC 148). As propositions, they would be of a peculiar sort – hybrid propositions between logical and empirical propositions (OC 136, 309). These are the so-called 'hinge propositions' of *On Certainty* (OC 341). We shall see that Wittgenstein rejects the propositional option; that, for him, 'the end is not certain "propositions" striking us immediately as true' (OC 204). Thinking of these beliefs as forming a picture, a *World-picture* – or *Weltbild* (OC 167) is a step in the right (nonpropositional) direction, but not the ultimate step. Wittgenstein's *ultimate* and crucial account of our basic beliefs is in terms of a *know-how*. But the way he arrives at this view is not clear cut.

Listing the concepts and images Wittgenstein uses in his depiction of our basic certainty might well prompt suspicion as to their mutual compatibility. Granted, the propositional option is rejected, but not the others. This leaves us perplexed: how can certainty be both a way of acting *and* a rule of grammar (OC 53, 57)? The perplexity partly evaporates when we realize that there is an attitude (act)/object ambiguity here. Wittgenstein, although he does not explicitly distinguish between the two, is in fact describing two things in *On Certainty*: objective *certainty* and objective *certainties*:

(1) a *kind* of certainty whose nature is foundational, which I will call *objective certainty*;[1]
(2) the 'objects' of that certainty, which I will call *objective certainties*, or *hinges* (e.g. 'I have a body', 'The world exists', 'Here is a hand').

But the ambiguity does not stop here. For Wittgenstein's elucidation of (1) – that is, of objective certainty – is itself effected from two different angles, or rather with two distinct philosophical aims. We might call one of the aims: *phenomenological*. Here, Wittgenstein is striving to describe *what it is like* to be objectively certain; to have an attitude of objective certainty.[2] The other aim might be called: *categorial*; Wittgenstein is here seeking to find out what *kind* of certainty objective certainty is; where it fits into our epistemic and doxastic[3] categories. Objective certainty is then depicted

(1a) as a doxastic *category*; a kind of certainty whose status or role in our system of beliefs is described as foundational or basic. Here, the *objective certainties*, or basic beliefs, that make up the '*scaffolding* of our thoughts' are recognized to be rules of grammar;

(1b) as a kind of doxastic *attitude*, whose objects are foundational but (unlike the objects of ordinary belief) *nonpropositional*. This attitude is best described as a kind of *know-how*, and its objects as *belonging to grammar*.

The objective certainty and its objects that Wittgenstein is striving to elucidate in (1a) and (1b) are of course one and the same but under different descriptions. We then have two different descriptions of objective certainty in *On Certainty*: one elucidating the phenomenological nature of the certainty; the other its categorial status. These two descriptions are inconsistent with each other only in that the images, which respectively inform them, are incompatible. As regards the philosophical elucidation of the concept of objective certainty, however, the phenomenological and categorial descriptions are not incompatible, but complementary. Let us briefly review these two complementary depictions.

Objective certainty as a doxastic *category*:
foundational images: *ground* and *background*

Where Wittgenstein speaks of objective certainty in *foundational* terms, he can be said to be situating objective certainty in our system of beliefs, and attempting to determine its doxastic status. In his attempts at *categorial* elucidation, his observations are, more often than not, couched in foundational imagery or terminology: we are *at the ground*; have reached *bedrock, rock bottom*.[4] The foundational metaphor, of course, harks back to traditional philosophy's quest for certainty in the form of fundamental principles or axioms, something which Wittgenstein alludes to in his own quest: 'We might speak of fundamental principles of human enquiry' (OC 70). But Wittgenstein, we shall see, does not persist in this path.

At times, the *ground* becomes a *background*, and it is likened to a *Weltbild* or 'world-picture':

> But I did not get my picture of the world [*Weltbild*] by satisfying myself of its correctness; nor do I have it because I am satisfied of its correctness.

> No: it is the inherited background [*Hintergrund*] against which I distinguish between true and false. (OC 94)

But even this *background* or *world-picture* is depicted as a kind of *ground*: a 'matter-of-course foundation' or 'substratum':

> …I say world-picture and not hypothesis, because it is the matter-of-course foundation for … research and as such also goes unmentioned. (OC 167)
>
> I have a world-picture. Is it true or false? Above all it is the substratum of all my enquiring and asserting. (OC 162)

All our enquiring and asserting, all our research; indeed all our language-games (OC 403); all our thoughts and actions (OC 411) are said to be based on this *ground*, or *background* or *World-picture*. To describe the nature of our foundational certainty, Wittgenstein uses images that evoke

- a basic or ultimate status (*foundation, ground, foundation walls, scaffolding, bedrock, substratum, rock bottom, inherited background*[5] (OC 253, 248, 211, 97, 162, 94));
- a difference in nature from the rest (e.g. the foundations from the house; the background from the foreground; the bedrock from the fluid waters);[6]
- an unquestionable solidity, hardness, reliability, stability (*solid, hardened, standing fast, immovable, unmoving, anchored* (OC 151, 96, 144, 655, 403, 103)).

Certainty here, is described as something that, in our system of belief, *stands fast* (e.g. OC 116, 125) whilst all else is questionable or questioned; it is a *bedrock* of *hardened propositions* (OC 96), *rules* (e.g. OC 95, 98), *norms of description* (e.g. OC 197) which are like the *hinges* on which the door of enquiry, of questions and answers, turns (OC 341). These descriptions confer to our *hinges* – our basic beliefs – the status of rules of grammar. In the section, '*Grammatical*: hinges are rules of grammar, not empirical propositions' in Chapter 4, we will come back to the claim that Wittgenstein considers our basic beliefs to be rules of grammar, and envisage dissenting views. For now, I am merely describing Wittgenstein's view.

Objective certainty as a doxastic *attitude*: a taking-hold and a blind trust

Wittgenstein depicts objective certainty as a doxastic *attitude* (both as a disposition and as an occurrence), where he refers to it as a *certainty* or *sureness*; an *assurance*; a *conviction*; a *being sure*; a *trust*; a *relying on*; a *belief*; an *attitude*; a *(direct) taking-hold*; a *holding fast*; *acting*; a *way of acting and speaking*; something that *I show* or that *shows itself in what I say and do*.[7] Our doxastic attitude here is not a belief *that*; we shall see that it is depicted as a

kind of animal trust, or belief-*in*,[8] and that its occurrent mode is described as a kind of know-how. Indeed, this '*sureness*' resembles an unhesitating mastery; it 'is just like directly taking hold of something' (OC 510). And so, we might ask, what is that *something* here that is being taken directly hold of?

The *phenomenological* nature of our objective certainty seems at first to resist philosophical elucidation. It is not the attitude itself that resists description – indeed, we have just listed several expressions descriptive of it (e.g. a taking-hold, a holding fast, a trusting) – it is rather the *object* of this attitude that is difficult to pin down. We want to say that objective certainty is a doxastic attitude. But what is it an attitude towards, if not propositions? The *categorial* elucidation of objective certainty depicts its objects as rules of grammar. But do we have an attitude of certainty towards a rule of grammar? Can we say that the attitude of certainty that underpins our knowledge is an attitude we have towards rules? This may be so for such cases as: '$2 + 2 = 4$', but what of such hinges as: 'Here is a hand' or 'I am standing here?' Is my certainty, in each case, a certainty directed towards a rule of grammar? In the latter types of case, it would be more correct to say that we have an attitude towards objects (including states of affairs and individuals) that *belong to grammar*; objects that are paradigms of our method of description. Such objects (states of affairs, individuals etc.) are, as much as samples or objects used in ostensive definitions, also *part of* grammar.

To say that a colour sample or a human hand is part of a grammatical rule is bound to cause some discomfort. And yet, sometimes *objects of experience* do function like rules of grammar. When Wittgenstein writes: 'some *things* stand unshakeably fast' (OC 144, my emphasis), there is here a definite allusion to something nonverbal. Indeed, our constitutive or definitional rules are not always in verbal form; nor do we always learn them verbally:

> I do not explicitly learn the propositions that stand fast for me. (OC 152)
>
> No one ever taught me that my hands don't disappear when I am not paying attention to them. (OC 153)

Nor are these certainties 'presuppositions':

> One cannot make experiments if there are not some things that one does not doubt. but that does not mean that one takes certain presuppositions on trust. When I write a letter and post it, I take it for granted that it will arrive – I expect this. (OC 337)

This expectation, like Moore's certainty that 'Here is a hand' is a certainty towards some *thing* (or object of experience) standing fast, so fast as to belong to our method of description, to our rules of grammar. Being some 'thing' does not preclude something from belonging to grammar. As

H.-J. Glock writes: 'the objects pointed at [in ostensive definitions] are samples, which provide standards for the correct use of words and are in that respect part of grammar' (1996, 25–6). And Kevin Mulligan makes clear: '… whatever non-linguistic items are necessary to the acquisition of language, exemplars, colour patterns or colour tables, *belong to language*' (1997, 203). Indeed, Wittgenstein proposes we call the *objects* used in ostensive definitions '*instruments* of the language':

> What about the colour samples that A shews to B: are they part of the *language*? Well, it is as you please. They do not belong among the words; yet when I say to someone: 'Pronounce the word "the" ', you will count the second 'the' as part of the sentence. Yet it has a role just like that of a colour-sample in language-game (8); that is, it is a sample [*Muster*] of what the other is meant to say.
>
> It is most natural, and causes least confusion, to reckon the samples among the instruments of the language [*Werkzeugen der Sprache*].[9] (PI 16)

A particular sample, say of colour, plays, like the standard metre in Paris, a 'peculiar role' (PI 50) in language:

> We can put it like this: This sample is an instrument of the language used in ascriptions of colour. In this language-game it is not something that is represented, but is a means of representation. – And … this gives this object a role in our language-game; it is now a *means* of representation. (PI 50)

These samples or *instruments of the language* can be said to *belong to* language inasmuch as they give language its meaning or use. And at PI 53, Wittgenstein suggests we call such samples or tables: *expressions of rules* of the language-game.[10] But if expressions of rules and instruments of the language belong *to* language, they do not, indeed *cannot*, belong *in* language – that is, they are not *part of* the language-*game*, but only *enable* the language-game. They are 'not something that is represented, but a *means* of representation'. It is in order to make sure this distinction is clearly in view that I suggest we speak of these objects as belonging to *grammar*, rather than to *language*. We might say, with H.-J. Glock, that they are 'part of grammar, not of the empirical application of language' (1996, 276):

> Ostensive definitions have the same normative function as other types of grammatical explanation. They determine what counts as the correct application of signs. For this reason, they are part of grammar, not of the empirical application of language. More precisely, they function as substitution rules which license the substitution of a demonstrative together

> with a gesture indicting a sample for the definiendum. They specify that anything which is *this* can be characterized as being *A*. An ostensive definition of red, for example, entitles one to pass from 'My bike is this ☞ colour' to 'My bike is red' (PR 78; PG 88–91, 202; BB 12, 85–90, 109). Language remains autonomous because the samples used in ostensive definitions are part of grammar (PI 16; PR 73). This claim does not amount to a stipulative extension of the concept of language. Rather, it reminds us of the fact that samples function as standards for the correct use of words, and thus have a normative role analogous to that of grammatical propositions. We explain 'Red is this☞ colour', and subsequently criticize misapplications of the term by reference to the sample we pointed at. (1996, 276)

As Glock also writes: '… there are expressions the meaning of which seems to be tied to the existence of objects' (1996, 273). But in fact the tie here is not an existential or an empirical tie, but a grammatical one. As Wittgenstein makes clear: 'What looks as if it *had* to exist … is a paradigm in our language-game; something with which comparison is made. And this may be an important observation; but it is none the less an observation concerning our language-game – our method of representation' (PI 50). The object pointed to in an ostensive definition is, we shall say, *instrumental* to language. Just as a hinge is instrumental to the turning of a door.

So although it may seem implausible to think of objective certainty as *in all cases* an attitude towards a rule of grammar, the implausibility disappears when we see that having an attitude towards some *objects* is sometimes equivalent to having an attitude towards a grammatical rule. Objective certainty is then not necessarily an attitude towards a *verbal* grammatical rule, but it *is* an attitude towards something that functions like grammar, or *belongs to grammar*. In the same way that being a sentence does not preclude a string of words from also being an act (a *speech-act*), being an object does not prevent something from being a means of representation or part of the expression of a rule. Function is not intrinsic to words or acts, but is dependent on use. And the same object can be either an object of description or a *means* of description – though *not simultaneously*. An object that serves as a means of representation loses its empirical status; that is, it becomes, for as long as it is thus used, uniquely a *grammatical object*, and not an object of empirical description. A (physical) hand can be a sample of (what we call) 'a hand', and as such (*qua* sample), belongs to grammar:

> *Qua* sample, the object belongs to the means of representation and cannot be described in empirical propositions. One and the same object may function now as a sample, now as an object described as having the defined property; but the normative and the empirical roles are mutually

> exclusive inasmuch as what functions as a norm of description cannot simultaneously be described as falling under that norm; it might be the subject of a subsequent measurement, but not as long as it is a canonical sample … (Glock 1996, 276)

The same, as we have seen in the section, 'Saying versus speaking' in Chapter 2, applies to sentences. The sentence: 'Here is a hand', in the circumstances in which Moore pronounces it, is not (as Moore wrongly believed) a description, but an ostensive definition, the articulation of a rule of grammar:

> … one might grant that Moore was right, if he is interpreted like this: a proposition saying that here is a physical object may have the same logical status as one saying that here is a red patch. (OC 52)

Objective certainty is a foundational belief in *something standing unshakeably fast* (OC 144), where 'something' refers to a rule of grammar or to an object of experience that functions like a rule of grammar (such as a sample, or an object that is pointed at in the process of ostensive definition: for example, 'This ☞ is (what we call) a hand'[11]). I will call *verbal* expressions of grammatical rules and tables (cf. PI 51) *expressions of rules of grammar*; and I will call samples, objects pointed to in ostensive definition, and any object (including states of affairs and individuals) that *belongs to* our method of representation: *grammatical objects* or *instruments*. So that when I am teaching someone English, my standing here would serve as a paradigmatic state of affairs; a sample used in my instruction of the use of the words 'I am standing here'. I could not teach anyone the correct use of those words if I were unable to stand. In heuristic circumstances (and these include philosophical elucidation), the sentences: 'I am standing here', 'There are people in the room', 'I have two hands' or 'I am holding a piece of paper in my hand' are verbal renderings of paradigmatic *states of affairs*. States of affairs that in nonheuristic situations go unmentioned, and grammatically underpin what we say and do. That is, my saying: 'There are not enough people here for a game of bridge' is hinged on the unmentioned certainty that can be verbalized as: 'There are people here'. Yet although rules of grammar are never verbalized in the stream of life, or within the language-*game*,[12] they can all (including those rules that make use of grammatical *objects*: for example, 'Red is this ☞ colour', 'Here ☞ is a hand', 'There is a pen on the table') be verbally formulated for heuristic or philosophical purposes. (Indeed, this is what is done in the *categorial* elucidation of objective certainty). I will therefore call all such formulations: *expressions of rules of grammar*.

Once we realize that Wittgenstein is in fact describing the same concept from two different angles – objective certainty as a doxastic *attitude* and

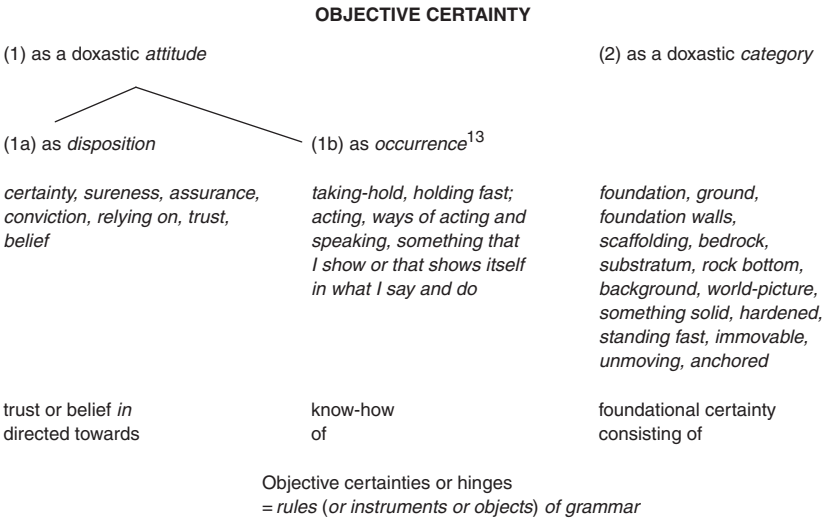

Chart 3.1 Objective certainty and objective certainties

objective certainty as a doxastic *category* – we are no longer befuddled by the abundance of seemingly incompatible images. And we are lenient also, when these overlap, as in: '… it is our *acting*, which lies at the bottom of the language-game' (OC 204). This overlap notwithstanding, here (Chart 3.1) is an attempt to chart some of the terms, concepts and images that Wittgenstein employs to describe objective certainty and objective certainties.

Objective *certainties*

Objective certainty is *like a* foundation. It *stands fast* in order that things can be built on it; and it *comes first* (OC 354). It is like a foundation also in that it is made up of individual 'building-stones' (*Bausteine*: OC 396) – which Wittgenstein refers to as 'propositions' or 'sentences' (*Sätze*) (e.g. OC 95; 152); as 'beliefs' or 'convictions' (e.g. OC 144; 248). So that the solidity of the whole foundation or bedrock or background is really indissociable from that of its individual components: the bedrock is a bedrock of certainties, of hardened *Sätze* (OC 96); it is individual certainties that form the (metaphorical) structure: 'my convictions do form a system, a structure' (OC 102). Our *Weltbild*, then, can be dissected into individuated certainties (e.g. 'The world exists', 'I exist', 'Human beings are not made of glass'), though this individuation does not imply that these certainties are assimilated individually or independently of one another. These certainties of my *world-picture* 'hang together' (OC 279); they are interwoven into a coherent network, and the

loss of certainty in one of them affects the coherence of the whole:

> If I wanted to doubt the existence of the earth long before my birth, I should have to doubt all sorts of things that stand fast for me. (OC 234)
>
> When we first begin to *believe* anything, what we believe is not a single proposition, it is a whole system of propositions. (OC 141)

But this talk of propositions makes it seem as if what we assimilated were just that: propositions. In fact, hinges are nonpropositional certainties that are formulated for heuristic purposes only, and our assimilation of them is not propositional, nor is it empirical or epistemic. So how do we come to have hinges? This is a question whose detailed discussion we shall have to postpone; for now, suffice it to say that some of our objective certainties are instinctive, whilst others are acquired – and those that are acquired, are not acquired epistemically or empirically, but through some form of conditioning.

OC 234 hints at another crucial feature of *objective certainty*: it is not a transcendental certainty (OC 47); what stands fast stands fast *for someone*. Although the certainty in question is termed *objective*, it is not 'objective' in the Nagelian sense – that is, it is not a perspectiveless or impersonal objectivity. To depict objective certainty is to depict someone being objectively certain. The ground stands fast *for me*; *I* have a world-picture – the idea of having a picture itself presupposes an onlooker. So that to be objectively certain conceptually requires a *vantage point*. And yet, Wittgenstein wants to wean us away from the perceptual, intellectual, epistemological metaphors; he wants to push us towards the conception of this certainty, not as a *seeing*, but as a *doing*:

> Giving grounds, however, justifying the evidence, comes to an end; – but the end is not certain 'propositions' striking us immediately as true, i.e. it is not a kind of *seeing* on our part; it is our *acting*, which lies at the bottom of the language-game. (OC 204)

He does this by using metaphors such as 'grasping' and 'taking hold', which evoke a practical stance. We shall see then that objective certainty can be assimilated to the category of belief inasmuch as, like ordinary belief, it is a disposition and an attitude; but it differs from ordinary belief in that it is a disposition whose occurrence can *only* be enacted (cf. section, '*Enacted*: hinge beliefs can only manifest themselves in action' in Chapter 4), and an attitude which is *nonpropositional*.

Objective certainty as a nonpropositional attitude

A taking hold

> I want to say: it's not that on some points men know the truth with perfect certainty. No: perfect certainty is only a matter of their attitude.
>
> (OC 404)

As M.J. Van Den Hoven puts it: 'In *On Certainty* Wittgenstein tried to break away from a philosophical tradition that construes our relation towards these certainties as being epistemic in nature: the basis is not something we know, but something we do' (1990, 273). What kind of attitude then, is this, nonepistemic, nonpropositional attitude? John Searle would call it a *commitment*. This is how he describes our nonpropositional certainty of, for example, the existence of the external world or of other minds; and this certainty is part of what he calls the 'Background': our set of abilities, skills, habits, and stances that are not themselves Intentional states but enable Intentional contents to work in the various ways that they do (1983, 143, 158):

> Realism, I want to say, is not a hypothesis, belief, or philosophical thesis; Realism is part of the Background in the following sense. My commitment to 'realism' is exhibited by the fact that I live the way that I do, I drive my car, drink my beer, write my articles, give my lectures, and ski my mountains. Now in addition to all of these activities, each a manifestation of my Intentionality, there isn't a further 'hypothesis' that the real world exists. My commitment to the existence of the real world is manifested whenever I do pretty much anything. It is a mistake to treat that commitment as if it were a hypothesis, as if in addition to skiing, drinking, eating, etc., I held a belief – there is a real world independent of my representations of it. (1983, 158–9)

The absence of a hypothesis makes this *commitment* very close to what Wittgenstein calls a 'direct taking-hold':

> It is just like directly taking hold of something, as I take hold of my towel without having doubts. (OC 510)
>
> And yet this direct taking-hold corresponds to a *sureness*, not to a knowing. (OC 511)

This 'sureness' is not prefaced by a precursory thought or hesitation. Wittgenstein also compares it to an '*utterance*', an '*immediate* utterance', and this is meant to contrast it with a conclusion. Let us take the passage above from the beginning:

> If I say 'Of course I know that that's a towel' I am making an *utterance*. I have no thought of a verification. For me it is an immediate utterance.
>
> I don't think of past or future. (And of course it's the same for Moore, too.)
>
> It is just like directly taking hold of something, as I take hold of my towel without having any doubts. (OC 510)

Indeed, Wittgenstein speaks of our objective certainty as 'something animal' (OC 359). By this, he means to distinguish this kind of assurance from

a justified or pondered assurance. In contrast to the kind of certainty we *come to* – from reasoning, observation or research – this certainty is akin to instinctive or automatic behaviour: to a direct *taking-hold* or thought-*less* grasp. This is just the kind of propositionless *commitment* or *nonpropositional attitude* that Searle describes.[14] And Wittgenstein also describes our certainty in terms of our maintaining an immovable stance or attitude (*Einstellung*: OC 381, 404) in the face of opposition: 'I should stay in the saddle however much the facts bucked' (OC 616). This all-confident, yet nonpropositional, *stance* or *commitment* is then also a kind of blind trust.

A blind trust

> Must I not begin to *trust* somewhere? That is to say: somewhere I must begin with not-doubting; and that is not, so to speak, hasty but excusable: it is part of judging.
>
> (OC 150; my emphasis)

My relation to an unfounded objective certainty is that: it *stands fast for me*. To say that something *stands fast for me* is to say that I rely on it (OC 603); that I regard it as solid (OC 151); that I have an attitude of *trust* towards it. Wittgenstein calls objective certainty a trust (OC 603)[15] in an effort to distance it from a reasoned belief. Indeed, we might say that objective certainty is a kind of trust or belief *in*, without that belief being reducible to a proposition.[16] It is a nonratiocinated and nonconscious trust, or *ur-trust*, which we share with neonates and animals.[17] This trust is not *experienced as trust*, but rather shows itself in the absence of mistrust – that is, in our *taking-hold* of something, *directly*, without any doubts – the way we take hold of a towel (OC 510). In ordinary cases, there is no preliminary hesitation and making sure that 'the towel is there'; that 'it is something I can take a hold of'. Nor do I systematically hesitate before sitting on a chair:

> When I sat down on this chair, of course *I believed* it would bear me. *I had no thought* of its possibly collapsing. (PI 575; my italics)

Certainty here is better described as the *utter* absence of doubt – 'I had no thought of its possibly collapsing' – than the lived experience of trust. So that the kind of certainty or trust in question here is what, after Austin (1962, 70), is called an *excluder concept*. Rather than affirm anything positive, it excludes something: 'doubt'. Another way of putting it is that trust here is the default attitude, and any absence of it the exception. Here trust is, as it were, recessive – a background, default, unconscious certainty. Its default status does not mean that this certainty or trust is less effective or operative, but that it is not a conscious experience. Indeed, this nonconscious trust shows itself in all our ordinary gestures and activities: as we wake up in the

morning, glance at the clock, head for the shower, dress, eat, rush to work – all these activities and the questions that accompany them (e.g. 'Is the clock slow again?'; 'Will I be on time for my appointment?'; 'Shall I walk or take a taxi?'; 'Is the hot water off again?') are poised on nonconscious and inarticulate certainties (hinges), such as: 'A clock tells time'; 'Time is how we measure the deployment of life'; 'We have conventions about being *on time*'; 'Walking is how I and most humans get from one place to another'; 'The shower tap will not melt in my hands nor the towel disappear as I take hold of it', and so on. Some of these certainties (e.g. 'A clock tells time') may have been consciously assimilated at some point, either through training or repeated exposure (cf. section, 'Origin of hinges' in Chapter 5), but once this assimilation is effected, the certainties are nonconscious, inarticulate certainties.[18] They require no cognitive attention; are not objects of thought, but constitute the ineffable background of thought: the 'matter-of-course foundation' which 'goes *unmentioned*' (OC 167). This background is not a theoretical one but a practical one.[19] It is a *background* which in fact amounts to a seamless expertise: '… the end is not an ungrounded presupposition: it is an ungrounded way of acting' (OC 110). Hinge certainty is not the product of an attentive or conscious attitude towards a hypothesis, but manifests itself as a flawless way of acting; as an expert and unhesitating grasp. Our not questioning, our trust or confidence, our *certainty*, takes the shape of a flawless know-how.

The relationship between a person and her background or *Weltbild* is a *know-how*. One knows one's way about, not through any theoretical awareness or rational process – not through any *knowledge that* – but through a kind of thoughtless *savoir-faire*. But this is no run-of-the-mill, *ordinary* know-how; it is an *objective* know-how. The difference will now be made clear.

Objective certainty as a know-how

> … the bus conductor, as he rushes through the aisle, tugs at the bell cord, calls out the bus stops, is pure, hard, nothing can scratch him; no crack between his gestures and himself through which the slightest impurity might penetrate.
>
> Nathalie Sarraute, *Le Planétarium* (my translation)

John Searle speaks of the 'Background' as a Background of *abilities* or *know-how*:[20]

> … a Background of abilities that are not themselves Intentional states. In order that I can now have the Intentional states that I do I must have certain kinds of know-how. I must know how things are and I must know how to do things, but the kinds of 'know-how' in question are not, in these cases, forms of 'knowing that'. (1983, 143)

Searle further describes the components of the Background:

> … the Background consists of mental[21] capacities, dispositions, stances, ways of behaving, know-how, savoir-faire, etc., all of which can only be manifest when there are some intentional phenomena, such as an intentional action, a perception, a thought, etc. (1992, 196)

In his description of the constituents of the Background, Searle lists: capacities, dispositions, stances, ways of behaving, know-how and savoir-faire. Let us try and sort these out. Capacities are assimilable to dispositions;[22] attitudes to stances. Ways of behaving, or what Searle also calls *Background ways of behaving* (1992, 77) are what Wittgenstein refers to as *ungrounded ways of acting*. These ways of acting are the occurrent version of our objective certainty, and Searle calls the manner of their occurrence a know-how or savoir-faire to evoke the expertise and smoothness that characterize them. We could say that the Background, on Searle's view, is nothing but dispositions that can actualize themselves into outright know-how. One example may illustrate what this means.[23] Take our certainty that tables offer resistance to touch. Rather than say that we *believe* that tables offer resistance to touch – which would imply, on Searle's view, an intentional or theoretical attitude – we should describe this certainty as a *stance* or *disposition* that I have towards tables and other solid objects: I *expect* (here, also, in the recessive sense of the term) tables to remain solid when I touch them, not to vanish, not to become human. And this nonreflective *stance* or *disposition* manifests itself in my *ways of behaving* which, when it comes to such certainties, are expert and smooth – a *know-how*: I know how to sit at a table, how to write on a table; I handle tables as solid, nonhuman, unthinking objects: I put stacks of books on them, fold them, build them, discard them; and all this, without a moment's hesitation or attention. The occurrence of my certainty that this is a table *is* my handling the table expertly and thoughtlessly.

The thoughtlessness is important here; it not only calls attention to the nonpropositionality of our objective certainty; it also underlines its resemblance to a reflex or automatic action. Indeed, hinge certainty is not a 'heed concept'.[24] Like that of instinctive and habitual actions, its manifestation does not involve any degree of attention. On the contrary, the presence of attention would be a sure sign that the certainty in question is *not* a hinge certainty. Indeed, where self-criticism and self-correction are attendant on ordinary know-how, the know-how of objective certainty is complacent and inattentive. No vigilance, no readiness to detect and correct lapses because there are no lapses. As Gilbert Ryle reminds us, to speak of 'know-how' is to imply success:

> What is involved in our descriptions of people as knowing how to make and appreciate jokes, to talk grammatically, to play chess, to fish, or to

> argue? Part of what is meant is that, when they perform these operations, they tend to perform them well, i.e. correctly or efficiently or successfully. (1949, 29)

And in the novel from which the epigraph of this section is taken, Nathalie Sarraute speaks also of the 'exceptional *savoir-faire*' and skill of the bus conductor. Yet whereas in ordinary know-how, there is self-regulation – the application of 'criteria in the conduct of the performance' (Ryle, p. 40) – objective certainty is a know-how in which there is no room for improvement. Whether our primitive know-how is natural or conditioned, it is unerring. Objective certainty shares with ordinary know-how only its success and confidence, for only in objective certainty is the performance so natural and the confidence so utter that one plays the game with one's eyes shut. And wins.

Objective certainty as a silent or ineffable certainty

The foundation for all our actions (OC 414) (including, of course, our language-games (OC 403, 411)) is, we have just seen, described in terms of acting. 'Giving grounds, … justifying the evidence, comes to an end', and 'it is our *acting*, which lies at the bottom of the language-game' (OC 204). By this, Wittgenstein means that our foundational certainty is a *practical* certainty (not a theoretical or propositional or presuppositional certainty) which manifests itself *as* a way of acting (OC 7, 284–5; 395); but also that it can *only* manifest itself thus – that is, in action, and not in *words; not* in our *saying it*:

> 'I know that this room is on the second floor, that behind the door a short landing leads to the stairs, and so on.' One could imagine cases where I should come out with this [*wo Ich die Äusserung machen würde*], but they would be extremely rare. But on the other hand I shew this knowledge day in, day out *by my actions and also in what I say*. (OC 431; my emphasis)

What Wittgenstein refers to as the rare cases where we would 'come out with', that is, *say* such sentences as 'I know that this room is on the second floor … ' or 'I know that this is a hand', are cases where these sentences do *not* function as hinges (although they are identical in appearance to sentences that formulate hinges), but as conclusions or descriptions – that is, as empirical propositions. As, for example, in the following case: I am asked to identify what I see on a blurry photograph; and I say '*I know that this is a hand* because I saw it very clearly on another print of the same shot.' This is a case where my 'coming out with' such a sentence is meaningful; where the sentence is an informative description, an empirical proposition, that *bears saying*. Whereas in Moore's circumstances, the same sentence did not bear saying. It was *meaningless* because it was *useless*.[25] The sentence was

doing no work; it was idle. It did not describe anything that required description; it did not persuade anyone of anything they were not previously certain of; nor did it prove anything. Moore's holding up his hand and saying 'Here is a hand' was not a demonstration, but a simple *monstration* – and all it showed was something that was never hidden. Meaning *is* use – where there is no use, there is no meaning. Hinges cannot be meaningfully *said*, but the *doppelgänger* of hinges can be – and we mistakenly take a hinge to be an empirical proposition simply because it has *doppelgänger*, or twins, that have empirical uses.[26]

Primitive certainty, it turns out, is not only a blind trust, but also a *silent* trust; a certainty that cannot (*as such*) manifest itself verbally. Indeed, Ortega also notes the nonformulation of our primitive beliefs, and speaks of them as *stillschweigend* (silent).[27] For Wittgenstein, however, it is not that our objective certainties are not usually said, but that they are *logically ineffable*: they *cannot* be meaningfully said *qua certainties* in the stream of the language-game.[28] Articulating these certainties *as such* in the language-game is useless, pointless, meaningless, and its only effect is to *arrest* the game:

> My difficulty can also be shewn like this: I am sitting talking to a friend. Suddenly I say: 'I knew all along that you were so-and-so.' Is that really just a superfluous, though true, remark?
>
> I feel as if these words were like 'Good morning' said to someone in the middle of a conversation. (OC 464)

The articulation of our objective certainties, *qua certainties*, in the stream of the language-game does not result in a display of certainty, but in their being perceived as queer (OC 553); incomprehensible (OC 347); a joke (OC 463) or a sign of the speaker's being demented (OC 467). And far from contributing to the language-game, such articulation simply blocks it.

Occurrence versus formulation

Were we nonhuman animals, it would be enough to say that objective certainty is a kind of nonpropositional, inarticulate, animal trust in certain things. But we are animals endowed with a conceptual language, and hence our normally inarticulate objective certainties get articulated by philosophers eager to elucidate the nature of our basic certainty. In doing this, philosophers give verbal articulation to certainties whose verbalization in ordinary discourse would be a sign of something gone awry:

> I am sitting with a philosopher in the garden; he says again and again 'I know that that's a tree, pointing to a tree that is near us. Someone else arrives and hears this, and I tell him: "This fellow isn't insane. We are only doing philosophy." ' (OC 467)

It must therefore be stressed that when such formulation occurs, it has an exclusively heuristic status: the status of a grammatical elucidation, not of an informative statement or of an objective certainty. Moore and Wittgenstein have given some of our nonlinguistic certainties linguistic expression. Such a linguistic rendering is important – it allows us to individuate and elucidate the objects of our basic certainty. But it is also misleading: it gives the impression that our basic beliefs are propositional, epistemic or intellectual. Hinge beliefs are not internal propositional or cognitive beliefs susceptible of inference.[29] Hinges do not have a propositional form, be it internal or external: they are not implicit propositional beliefs that lie dormant in some belief-box until occasionally stirred to inform our external propositional beliefs. The hinge belief verbalized as: 'I have a body' is a disposition of a living creature which manifests itself in her *acting in the certainty of having a body*. When asleep or unconscious, this belief remains a disposition, but becomes occurrent in any normal use she makes of her body[30] – for example, in her eating, running and her *not* attempting to walk through walls as if she were a disembodied ghost. This occurrence of her belief resembles an instinctive reaction, not a tacit belief. My hinge belief that 'I have a body' is much the same as a lion's instinctive certainty of having a body. In both cases, this belief manifests itself in acting embodied; in my case, however, it can also manifest itself *in* the verbal references I make to my body.[31] It must be clear that Moore-type sentences and the formulation of hinges in *On Certainty*, and in this book (cf. especially taxonomy in Chapter 5), are artificial verbalizations – *not occurrences* – of our primitive (animal or conditioned) certainties. What philosophers have traditionally called basic beliefs, and what Wittgenstein alludes to as 'hinge propositions', are merely heuristic, or artificial, verbalizations of certainties that can *only* show themselves – *in* what we say and do.

Wittgenstein's phenomenological description of objective certainty renders the mindless, animal certainty with which we move about in the world. His categorial description – his talk of 'hinge *Sätze*' – goes one philosophical step further. It attempts to elucidate the *status* of these enacted certainties – our mindless ways of acting – in our system of beliefs. So that whereas the phenomenological description remains at the animal level, at a description of our *practical* stance; with the categorial description, we are in danger of being seen gliding on an invisible bedrock of what have traditionally been called 'tacit beliefs'. I urge that we refrain from this temptation, and that we understand these various philosophical elucidations as drawing the following picture: our basic certainty is animal or *practical* through and through. We can verbalize it, but this is something philosophers do in an effort to understand the nature of our certainty. The verbalization or formulation of an objective certainty is never an *occurrence* of objective certainty, but only a mere heuristic operation. Our

objective certainty occurs or manifests itself exclusively as a know-how, which, for philosophical analysis, we depict by articulating into individuated certainties. Verbalizing these certainties makes us realize another thing about them: they constitute the ineffable underpinning of knowledge, description and inquiry. They are the invisible hinges upon which our questions revolve. They *condition* our acts and thoughts. This is precisely what grammatical rules do.[32]

Objective certainties as rules of grammar

Wittgenstein likens our objective certainties to rules (OC 95, 494, 98); rules of grammar (OC 57–9); method (OC 151, 318); norms of description (OC 167), frame of reference (OC 83), and this highlights the nonpropositional character of hinges and our nonepistemic assimilation of them. Hinges are like the rules of a game, more specifically, like the rules that underpin our language-games.[33] Some of our objective certainties are instinctive, whilst others are acquired, but the instinctive ones are not any *less* grammatical rules (cf. section, 'Empirical *and* logical' in Chapter 4). Granted, mathematical equations and other *linguistic* certainties (e.g. '2 + 2 = 4'; 'This is (what we call) a table') are the prototypes of acquired hinges: they are explicitly formulated to instruct us in the use of words and numbers, but the certainty: 'Humans have bodies', though perhaps never explicitly formulated as a rule, also conditions our correct use of words. *Explicit* formulation of our objective certainties is necessary only in the case of deliberate training/drill, as in teaching a child or a foreign speaker a grammatical rule; or as in philosophers attempting to determine the status of some sentences (cf. OC 467, 406) (though formulation of our basic beliefs by philosophers is not always acknowledged or recognized as the formulation of *rules*). The *formulation* or articulation of hinges (grammatical rules) is not to be confused with the *manifestation* or *occurrence* of hinges. The manifestation of our objective certainties, *qua certainties*, is *ineffable*. Chart 3.2 on the next page ought to make this clearer.

My objective certainties show themselves in my using such sentences as exemplified in the left column, and in acting in such ways as exemplified in the right column. My objective certainty is a *dispositional* certainty about some things, which shows or *manifests* itself in the way I act and speak about these things.

The objectivity of objective certainty: 'It stands fast for me … and many others'

Objective certainty is both a *personal* and a *shared* certainty. It is personal in that it stands fast *for me* that, say, the world exists. It is part of *my* ground,

Formulations of some objective certainties

A. 'The world exists'
B. 'Human beings need nourishment'
C. '5 > 4'
D. 'I have a body'

Formulation is always merely heuristic and cannot count as a manifestation or occurrence of objective certainty

Manifestations/occurrences of these objective certainties

Occurrences of objective certainties are logically ineffable; they only show themselves, and they do so

In what we say	and/or	In what we do
A. 'What if Nostradamus were right and the end of the world were nigh'		A. I work for Greenpeace and our aim is to save the world from ecological destruction
B. 'He starved to death'		B. I feed myself, my children; take food with me to places where I know it will be scarce; worry about the effect of anorexia on my daughter.
C. 'Now that John has arrived, I can get a 4+ group ticket'		C. When teaching arithmetic, I subtract 4 from 5; not 5 from 4
D. 'I sprained my ankle'		D. I go to the doctor, I move about, I feed and dress myself

Chart 3.2 Formulation versus occurrence

of *my* background. Although the certainty here is *complete* – that is: *objective* – it is nevertheless *my* certainty:

> I act with *complete* certainty. But this certainty is my own. (OC 174)

My relation to objective certainties is that they *count for me* as solid, unmoving, unwavering foundations underpinning all that I say and do. I do not contemplate these certainties unless it be, as I am doing now, to analyse their nature and their role in human life. They are the hinges upon which my thinking, inquiring and contemplating takes place. They are certainties *for me*, in that sense. In that, without them I could neither think nor act. *Me, personally*. I could not move were I not *objectively certain* that I have a body (cf. section, 'Autopersonal hinges' in Chapter 6); I could not have meaningful transactions with other people were I not certain of what most words mean, or that people are biologically and in other ways similar, and so on. These are certainties that *stand fast for me* and play a role in *my* life,

enabling me to be an *operative human being*. They count *for me* in that *I* could find myself bereft of one or more of these certainties, and it would affect *my* life, without anyone else finding themselves thus bereft. There is a *personal* relationship between my certainties and me, one that need not affect any other human being. But the importance of these certainties is also internally linked to their being *shared* certainties. Kevin Mulligan speaks of 'shared or collective primitive certainty' with respect to meaning, rule following and rules (2000, 15). If, as Wittgenstein suggests, hinges are grammatical rules, then objective certainty, however personal or, in Mulligan's term, 'solitary' (ibid.) an occurrence, is never merely personal:

> Instead of 'I know…', couldn't Moore have said: 'It stands fast for me that…'? and further: 'It stands fast for me and many others…' (OC 116)
>
> The truths which Moore says he knows, are such as, roughly speaking, all of us know, if he knows them. (OC 100)
>
> But it isn't just that *I* believe in this way that I have two hands, but that every reasonable person does. (OC 252)
>
> There is something universal here; not just something personal. (OC 440)

Indeed, although it is *I* who believes, we can only speak of 'objective certainty' where my certainty can be objectively established:

> It needs to be *shewn* that no mistake was possible. Giving the assurance 'I know' doesn't suffice. For it is after all only an assurance that I can't be making a mistake, and it needs to be *objectively* established that I am not making a mistake about *that*. (OC 15)

As Avrum Stroll puts it, our certainty must be 'objective and interpersonal' (1994, 153):

> That the earth is very old and that other persons exist are both certain and foundational… Whatever is foundational must not only be certain but other than private or personal as well. (ibid.)

Objective certainty is both solitary and collective. It is objective not in the sense of being *human-independent* or *perspectiveless*: '*It is objectively certain for me* that the world exists' is not to say 'That the world exists *is certain*.' Two different senses of the term 'certainty' are being used here. The *physical* certainty that the world exists is *not* the kind of certainty that Wittgenstein is concerned with in *On Certainty*. Indeed, his insistence on distinguishing truth from certainty is aimed at resisting the interpretation of 'objective certainty' as qualifying what *truly* (or otherwise) mirrors the world. So much is Wittgenstein set against this interpretation that he goes as far as to refer to

our objective certainty as a *mythology* (OC 95, 97).[34] Our hinges are not reflections of how the world is; they are our fundamental *Einstellungen* (OC 404), but these attitudes are not *grounded on* or *justified by* how the world is. It may be *true* that 'I am sitting here', that 'I speak French', that 'The world exists', but *as* formulations of hinges, these sentences do not reflect truth; they merely formulate nonpropositional beliefs. The notion of *doppelgänger* is useful here, as it will be elsewhere in this book. The *same sentence* can have different meanings and statuses depending on context. The sentence: 'I speak French' can be used to inform someone of what language I speak – and here it may be a true or false statement; but the same sentence (its *doppelgänger*) cannot be used to inform myself. As an objective certainty, as a hinge, it articulates no truth; it only translates my unjustified (to myself) certainty that I speak French. *As a hinge*, the sentence cannot be an object of knowledge or a description of facts; in other contexts, the same sentence *can* be a description of facts. In *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein is concerned with that and how *we* are certain of some things; how these things count as certain *for us*; stand fast *for us* – regardless of whether these things are (or not) certain *tout court*; whether they are or not facts. We are speaking here of an '*inherited* background', not of a 'view from nowhere'.

In this chapter, I have attempted to disentangle some of the visible and less visible knots which – as I have observed from my various formal and informal presentations of *On Certainty* – prevent a smooth reading of the work. I hope it can now be seen that although Wittgenstein conjures up a great variety of images and concepts in his efforts to understand a certainty which appears to him both as *rigid* as a rule of grammar and as *supple* as a reflex action, this diversity is not an incoherence. All of Wittgenstein's images point towards the same conceptual features, which I shall set out in the following chapter.

4
The Features of Hinges

As we have just seen, Wittgenstein uses many images and concepts in an effort to understand the certainties that perplexed G.E. Moore and philosophers long before him. The heterogeneity of Wittgenstein's images and concepts signal the difficulty involved in trying to capture the nature of these certainties; it does not however imply an ultimate lack of conceptual coherence. Indeed, all these images point towards the same conceptual features; hinges are *all*:

(1) *indubitable*: doubt and mistake are logically meaningless
(2) *foundational*: they do not result from justification
(3) *nonempirical*: they are not derived from the senses
(4) *grammatical*: they are rules of grammar
(5) *ineffable*: they cannot be *said*
(6) *enacted*: they can only *show* themselves *in* what we say and do

On Certainty traces the arduous process by which Wittgenstein comes to see hinges as having the above features.

Indubitability: doubt and mistake as logically meaningless

> There are cases where doubt is unreasonable, but others where it seems logically impossible.
>
> (OC 454)

What distinguishes *objective* certainty from *subjective* certainty is its *logical* nature:

> With the word 'certain' we express complete conviction, the total absence of doubt, and thereby we seek to convince other people. That is *subjective* certainty.
>
> But when is something objectively certain? When a mistake is not possible. But what kind of possibility is that? Mustn't mistake be *logically* excluded? (OC 194)

Our being objectively certain about some things is not a matter of subjective or psychological conviction; nor is it that in some cases doubt is simply not practised or not necessary, but that it is logically impossible:[1] 'I cannot doubt this proposition *without giving up all judgment*' (OC 494; my emphasis). To have a doubt about whether or not cars grow out of the earth would be tantamount to having given up our human bounds of sense:

> It is quite sure that motor cars don't grow out of the earth. We feel that if someone could believe the contrary he could believe *everything* that we say is untrue, and could question everything that we hold to be sure.
>
> … someone who could believe that does not accept our whole system of verification. (OC 279)

A mistake is something we make out of negligence, fatigue or ignorance, but we could not call someone's *conviction* that motorcars grow out of the earth, a 'mistake':

> In certain circumstances a man cannot make a *mistake*. ('Can' is here used logically, and the proposition does not mean that a man cannot say anything false[2] in those circumstances.) If Moore were to pronounce the opposite of those propositions which he declares certain, we should not just not share his opinion: we should regard him as demented. (OC 155)

This means that when I believe that I am sitting in my room when I am not, I *cannot* be said to be in the innocuous realm of *mistakes*:

> If I believe that I am sitting in my room when I am not, then I shall not be said to have *made a mistake*. But what is the essential difference between this case and a mistake? (OC 195)

The difference is that between a mistake and an anomaly, such as a mental disturbance:

> I should not call this a *mistake*, but rather a mental disturbance, perhaps a transient one. (OC 71)
>
> Not every false belief of this sort is a mistake. (OC 72)

And the difference consists in that:

> … a *mistake* doesn't only have a cause, it also has a ground. i.e., roughly: when someone makes a mistake this can be fitted into what he knows aright. (OC 74)

But if I believe that I am sitting in my room when I am not, there is no 'fitting'; there are no *grounds* which could explain or justify this belief as a mistake – though there is a *cause* which could explain it as, for example, a mental disturbance. My 'false belief' (OC 72) here would not be a mistake but 'a complete irregularity that happens as an exception' (OC 647). The exception in such cases may consist in the *individual* being exceptional, outside the norm – that is, sensorially (OC 526) or mentally disturbed: 'If someone said to me that he doubted whether he had a body I should take him to be a half-wit' (OC 257). There is a logical incompatibility between being *wrong* or *uncertain* about certain statements – that is, doubting, hesitating, verifying them – and the circumstances or oneself being normal. If I said, in nonfigurative seriousness: both my biological parents are men,[3] it isn't the truth-content of my statement that would be under investigation, but my ability to understand the words I am using or, more sadly, my sanity – *I* would be under investigation. In some cases, a doubt, a mistake, indeed any hesitation, is a measure of the person's lack of stability, a sign of madness. It is *logically* impossible to doubt or be wrong about some beliefs whilst remaining within the ken of normal human understanding:

> Suppose a man could not remember whether he had always had five fingers or two hands? Should we understand him? Could we be sure of understanding him? (OC 157)

In some cases, then, although the behaviour *looks like* the behaviour of *doubt*, it would be more correct to call it *doubt-behaviour* – behaviour that only resembles (what we call) doubt:

> If someone said that he doubted the existence of his hands, kept looking at them from all sides, tried to make sure it wasn't 'all done by mirrors', etc., we should not be sure whether we ought to call that doubting. We might describe his way of behaving as like the behaviour of doubt, but his game would not be ours. (OC 255)

For in such cases, there are no *real* grounds for doubt, and in our game doubting needs grounds: 'one doubts on specific grounds' (OC 323, 458).

To say that hinges are logically indubitable is not to say that they are *necessarily true*. There is no question of truth or falsity in the bedrock: 'If the true is what is grounded, then the ground is not *true*, nor yet false' (OC 205). The indubitability of our hinges does not result from our having confirmed them, but stems from their not being susceptible of confirmation or falsification at all. Hinges are logically impervious to doubt. At some point, justification and doubt lose their sense. Reasons stop somewhere; there where the spade turns is the ungrounded ground, the rock bottom of our convictions.

Foundational: hinges do not result from justification

> To be sure there is justification; but justification comes to an end. (OC 192)

The foundational character of objective certainty is referred to explicitly in *On Certainty*: 'At the foundation of well-founded belief is belief that is not founded' (OC 253); or less directly in the allusion to an 'inherited *background*' (OC 94; my emphasis); but more often, it is alluded to metaphorically or analogically. Analogically, it was noted, objective certainty is compared to rules and to 'immediate utterances' – both ways of expressing its logical primitivity, its ungroundedness. Metaphorically, objective certainty is said to be like a scaffolding: 'the *scaffolding* of our thoughts' (OC 211), or like 'foundation-walls' (OC 248) or 'hinges' (OC 341). Another group of metaphors is of a more geological character: Wittgenstein speaks of 'hard rock' (OC 99), 'bedrock' (498); refers to 'the rock bottom of my convictions' (OC 248) and 'the substratum of all my enquiring and asserting' (OC 162). This substratum is a resting place; a place of no questions and no doubts, where our spade is turned, where we rest content. Underlying the hurly-burly of our hesitations, investigations and measurements lies this rock bottom of immeasurable conviction:

> I may indeed calculate the dimensions of a bridge, sometimes calculate that here things are more in favour of a bridge than a ferry, etc. etc., – but somewhere I must begin with an assumption or a decision. (OC 146)

Scientists can estimate the age of the world only inasmuch as they *assume*, as a rule of enquiry, not as an object of enquiry, that 'the world exists and has existed for a long time':

> If I say '*we assume* that the earth has existed for many years past' (or something similar), then of course it sounds strange that we should *assume* such a thing. But in the entire system of our language-games it belongs to the foundations. The assumption, one might say, forms the basis of action, and therefore, naturally, of thought. (OC 411)

Wittgenstein does not much like the term 'assumption', for it has connotations of hastiness and superficiality (OC 358) which do not apply here; it suggests that hinges are a time-saving device for getting on with our investigations as best we can; a *pis aller*:

> But it *isn't* that the situation is like this: We just *can't* investigate everything, and for that reason we are forced to rest content with assumption. If I want the door to turn, the hinges must stay put. (OC 343; first emphasis mine)

For Wittgenstein, it isn't that we *make do*, but that we logically *cannot do otherwise*. Our being objectively certain about some things is a way of *life*, not of thought; not an intellectual stratagem: 'My *life* consists in my being content to accept many things' (OC 344).

In the intellectual retracing of our inquiries and investigations, in the delineation of our reasons and of our reasoning, we come to a natural halt. At some point, we can no longer *reason back*, just as there was no *reasoning from* in the initial acquisition of our assurance: 'I have not consciously arrived at the conviction by following a line of thought' (OC 103). Never having doubted and therefore checked these beliefs, we cannot say that our assurance is based on or supported by any grounds: 'I cannot say that I have good grounds for the opinion that cats do not grow on trees or that I had a father and a mother' (OC 282). As Peter Strawson writes: 'there is no such thing as *the reasons for which we hold* these beliefs' (1985, 20). The ungroundedness of objective certainty is *conceptual*, not psychological or practical. It is not, therefore, as Michael Williams suggests (2001, 35), that the justificatory process need not *actually* occur (though grounds must be produced on demand), or that it need not be self-conscious, but that objective certainty is *conceptually* groundless, groundless by nature. If our certainty stems from justification, it is not a *hinge* certainty. The chain of explanation stops somewhere, and this point of nonratiocination is precisely the point where certainty is at its peak; where, unlike the object of my *knowledge*, the object of my *certainty* is not susceptible of negation or disbelief, of doubt or mistake. And yet grounds are lacking: no reasoning supports this unfalsifiable certainty. In fact, grounds would be useless; no surer than my ungrounded conviction:

> … my not having been on the moon is as sure a thing for me as any grounds I could give for it. (OC 111)
>
> My having two hands is, in normal circumstances, as certain as anything that I could produce in evidence for it.
> That is why I am not in a position to take the sight of my hand as evidence for it. (OC 250)

No amount of explanation would convince me more, would make me more comfortably certain than my ungrounded certainty. Here then, we are no longer in the realm of explanation: this is the 'point [where] one has to pass from explanation to mere description' (OC 189). To the question of 'why we believe?', there is no 'because …'; simply: '*This* is how we act':

> Why do I not satisfy myself that I have two feet when I want to get up from a chair? There is no why. I simply don't. This is how I act. (OC 148)

All we can say when asked for reasons is: 'Any "reasonable" person behaves like *this*' (OC 254). The *this* replaces the *because*; description takes the place

of explanation. And yet this lack of explanation is not due to a lack of research, inquisitiveness or to any failure at all on our part: 'that something stands fast for me is not grounded in my stupidity or credulity' (OC 235). On the contrary, it would be my insistence on looking for explanations that would be a sign of derangement, eccentricity or uncommon naivety:

> Imagine that the schoolboy really did ask 'and is there a table there even when I turn round, and even when *no one* is there to see it?' Is the teacher to reassure him – and say 'of course there is!'?
>
> Perhaps the teacher will get a bit impatient, but think that the boy will grow out of asking such questions. (OC 314)

Such questions are out of order because they demand an explanation; they wrongly assume that there is an empirical justification to our certainty, whereas this is a certainty that *underlies* all questions and thinking (OC 415). It is a *norm* of thought and action, not a *conclusion*, as Wittgenstein makes clear a few passages later: ' "The question doesn't arise at all." Its answer would characterize a *method*' (OC 318).

Despite the abundance of foundational images, *On Certainty*'s foundationalism is often criticized and rejected.[4] Various reasons have been offered to justify this rejection. One is the presence in *On Certainty* of an apparent coherentism or holism. As D.Z. Phillips writes: 'For Wittgenstein, basic propositions are not foundational. They enjoy their status within practices where they are held fast by all that surrounds them'; 'for Wittgenstein, the basic propositions he discusses in *On Certainty* are not foundations, not prior assumptions. On the contrary, they are held fast by all that surrounds them' (1988 xv, 89). Before discussing this objection and others, I would like the address a more basic one: there can be no pertinence or plausibility in invoking foundationalism where there are no basic *propositions* to speak of.[5] Can we help ourselves to epistemic theories when the point is precisely that we do not have to do here with epistemic beliefs? My answer is that we can. And, here, Avrum Stroll's emphasis on the revolutionary nature of Wittgenstein's foundationalism is key:

> Wittgenstein's genius consisted in constructing an account of human knowledge whose foundations, whose supporting presuppositions were in no way like knowledge. Knowledge belongs to the language game, and certitude does not. The base and the mansion resting on it are completely different. This is what Wittgenstein means when he says that knowledge and certainty belong to different *categories*. In saying this he realized that he was saying something philosophically insightful about the entire Western philosophical tradition. And it is his rejection of the thesis of homogenous foundations that, to a great extent, separates him from that tradition. (1994, 145–6)

Our certainty is not a flowing river, but the bedrock which allows the river to flow; not a construction, but the scaffolding which makes construction possible; the hinges on which a door can turn. The basis differs from what it supports. The revolutionary nature of Wittgenstein's depiction of our basic beliefs is their *differing* from the rest of our beliefs, and they do so in being nonpropositional and nonepistemic. We do not *know* the primitive beliefs that underpin our knowledge; they are not falsifiable propositions. How then do they underpin anything? And what are *they*? Can we speak here of a *something* at all? No, but it is not a nothing either (PI 304).

Foundationalist and coherence theories are accounts of the nature of our beliefs, which do not draw a *categorial* line between our basic beliefs and our more sophisticated ones. These accounts use notions of hierarchical priority or mutual dependence that are propositional and epistemic throughout; they can help themselves to propositions which they can hang on their justificatory trees and link with inferential arrows. What Wittgenstein is doing is correcting that picture. He is not saying that the picture is all wrong; but that its depiction of basic beliefs is wrong. He therefore retains the traditional structural metaphors (foundation and coherence), and replaces the basic structural components with nonpropositional items. The nonpropositional items are not a 'nothing': they are certainties that manifest themselves in our ways of acting; and the co-presence of these terminal certainties is conditioned by a coherence which is not less of one for being nonratiocinated: it is an 'unconcerted consensus' (I develop this in the next chapter). The structural metaphors which inform foundational and coherence theories are good ones; they eloquently render the nature and position of our basic beliefs in our doxastic systems, and therefore there is no reason for not using the same structural metaphors. But traditionally, philosophers have crucially distorted the nature of our basic beliefs: by putting them into sentences, they thought they were dealing with propositions. So that Wittgenstein adopts the picture but effects the correction. Of course, this assimilation of Wittgenstein's abundant foundational and coherentist images and descriptions to foundationalism and coherentism does not pretend to be a snug fit. Wittgenstein's nonpropositional certainties must do some shaking up in order to find their place in these theories, but *that* is precisely the point.

We can now go back to examining the first objection mentioned to the presence of foundationalism in *On Certainty*: the presence of coherentism. There is, of course, no denying the presence of coherentist images in *On Certainty*,[6] but nor can the presence of foundational images be ignored. Indeed, Wittgenstein's insistence, both in literal and metaphorical terms, is unambiguous: he believes that hinges are foundational *and* they cohere. They underlie all questions and all thinking (OC 415) *and* they are held fast by what lies around them (OC 144). And indeed, as some philosophers have argued, that coherence is part of the picture need not preclude its also being

a foundational picture. Hilary Kornblith, for one, who, while agreeing that the structure of belief dependence is hierarchical or foundational, does not see this as precluding the *causal* dependence of these beliefs on others: 'In spite of the "foundational" structure of justificatory trees, no beliefs are justified independently of their relations to other beliefs' (1980, 149). In Wittgenstein's view, the position and stability of our *terminal* beliefs are dependent on, or reinforced by, their coherence with other terminal beliefs – where coherence cannot be understood in terms of propositional or rational justification, but in causal terms (such as, for instance, repeated exposure). The foundation is a rock solid basis whose solidity is not due to justification, but to causal reinforcement. For example, my terminal belief that 'Human beings exist' is causally dependent on, or reinforced by, other terminal beliefs, such as 'I have seen human beings around me ever since I can remember', 'I interact with human beings every day', 'I can distinguish human beings from dogs and cats', and so on. Wittgenstein's stance might therefore be seen as a kind of '*foundherentism*' – to borrow Susan Haack's term, though without the epistemic features and implications of Haack's foundherentism: *objective certainty*, not truth, being the binding force.[7]

Another objection to Wittgenstein's foundationalism, evoked mainly by Therapeutes[8] and neo-Pragmatists, is that anything remotely resembling a fixed starting point would be anathema to Wittgenstein in that it would smack of transcendentalism. I will counter this unwarranted assimilation of *standing fast* to transcendental or metaphysical structures in Chapter 8.

Lastly, commentators have rejected Wittgenstein's foundationalism because they have been so mesmerized by the changing aspect of the riverbed that they have completely overlooked its immutable component.[9] So much so that Wittgenstein's *Weltbild* has been likened to Quine's *web of beliefs*, and hinge certainties viewed as nothing but empirical beliefs that are more enduring than others.[10] But compared to Quine's free-floating fabric of belief indeterminately bound by experience at the edges and loosely sewn together by revisable statements, Wittgenstein's several images and metaphors tell an unquestionably *foundational* story.[11] A story which, as Christopher Hookway concedes, makes Wittgenstein's 'un-Quinean adherence to a rough dualism of propositions' 'hard to deny' (1996, 74).

There is a *categorial* difference, not a difference of degree, between rules that *underlie* thinking and propositions. Indeed, Wittgenstein excludes the idea of a continuum in his description of the relation between norms and empirical propositions in our system of beliefs: 'one isn't trying to express even the greatest subjective certainty, but rather that certain propositions seem to underlie all questions and all thinking' (OC 415). The thrust of *On Certainty* must not be lost sight of. Wittgenstein takes Moore to task for confusing knowledge with the nonepistemic brand of conviction he dubs 'objective certainty', and he drives a categorial wedge between

them: ' "Knowledge" and "certainty" belong to different *categories*' (OC 308) – *objective* certainty, that is. The idea of a mere continuum, or difference of degree, linking empirical and logical propositions is a Quinean conception (1953, 46), not a Wittgensteinian one. For Wittgenstein, it is *not* true that a mistake gets more and more improbable as we go from a hypothesis to a rule. At some point, a mistake has 'ceased to be conceivable' (OC 54). A change of category, not of degree, has occurred. And Wittgenstein's categorial distinction is made even more un-Quinean by the fact that hinges are not *derived* from experience. This is clearly stated by G.H. von Wright:

> Consider for example the proposition that I have two hands. It would sometimes be said, I think, that it is based on the evidence of my senses (Cf. Moore, 'Certainty', p. 243). But this is not, as a general statement, correct; … the implicit trust which under normal circumstances I have that I have two hands is *not* founded on 'the evidence of my senses.' (Cf. §125) (1982, 170, 171)

Nonempirical: hinges are not derived from experience

We did not come to the certainty that 'Humans think' from having observed humans, chairs and tables with the aim of finding out whether they could think and concluded from these observations that humans can, while chairs and tables cannot. Nor is inductive reasoning responsible for our certainty:

> 'The certainty that the fire will burn me is based on induction.' Does this mean that I argue to myself: 'Fire has always burned me, so it will happen now too?' (PI 325)
>
> 'Why do you believe that you will burn yourself on the hot-plate? – Have you reasons for this belief; and do you need reasons?' (PI 477)

On an empirical interpretation, it is our *reasoning* from our experience of the success of the game (which involves checking, trial and error, making sure, investigating, linking cause and effect and so on) that encourages us to go on playing. This, Wittgenstein rejects:

> The squirrel does not infer by induction that it is going to need stores next winter as well. And no more do we need a law of induction to justify our actions or our predictions. (OC 287)

There is no arguing or reasoning to oneself, no inner inference linking previous experience to present certainty, though it may seem that way; it may

seem that we *derive* our certainty from previous experience:

> But isn't it experience that teaches us to judge like *this*, that is to say, that it is correct to judge like this? But how does experience *teach* us, then? *We* may derive it from experience, but experience does not direct us to derive anything from experience. (OC 130)

How could experience *teach* us anything if we did not first have a capacity to assimilate? How could experience *direct* us to trust it? Our trust cannot be both *derived from* experience and *prior to* trusting the teachings of experience: 'If [experience] is the ground of our judging like this, and not just the cause, still we do not have a ground for seeing this in turn as a ground' (OC 130).

Hinge certainties are not inferred from experience, or from the success or reliability of some experiences:

> After putting a book in a drawer, I assume it is there, unless…. 'Experience always proves me right. There is no well attested case of a book's (simply) disappearing.' (OC 134)

Wittgenstein opposes this reasoning. For it 'has *often* happened that a book has never turned up again, although we thought we knew for certain where it was' (ibid.). If our beliefs were really derived from experience, why have we never concluded from *such* cases that books *do* simply disappear?

> But do we not simply follow the principle that what has always happened will happen again (or something like it)? What does it mean to follow this principle? Do we really introduce it into our reasoning? Or is it merely the *natural law* which our inferring apparently follows? This latter it may be. It is not an item in our considerations. (OC 135)

It may be that there is a 'natural law', a law of induction – that, 'by favour of nature', things happen regularly – and that our inferring, our system of enquiry, follows from that, but not our certainty. It is the case that natural phenomena are reliable, that people do not disappear and reappear at will, that mountains do not sprout up in a day. Yet this regularity does not *explain* or *justify* our certainty. Our certainty is not a rational conclusion that we have come to from having observed the regularity of things; nor is it rooted in our awareness of the unanimity of social practice, or *grounded* in our recurrent success:

> No, experience is not the ground for our game of judging. Nor is its outstanding success. (OC 131)

Experiential, not empirical: experience, yes, but not as a ground

And yet Wittgenstein does not totally rule out the contribution of (previous) experience to hinge certainty:

> What reason have I, now, when I cannot see my toes, to assume that I have five toes on each foot?
>
> Is it right to say that my reason is that previous experience has always taught me so? Am I more certain of previous experience than that I have ten toes?
>
> That previous experience may very well be the *cause* of my present certitude; but is it its ground? (OC 429)

Experience and success are ruled out inasmuch as they are thought to be *grounds* for our certainty, but noninferentially, experience and success *do* contribute to our certainty. We do not use recurrent experience and success as *arguments*, but they constitute an inarticulate, pervasive, nonratiocinated, *lived* confirmation of our certainty:[12] 'it is true that this trust is *backed up* by my own experience'; 'We believe, so to speak, that this great building exists, *and then* we see, now here, now there, one or another small corner of it' (OC 275–6; my italics). We *experience* the world and its regularities, but we do not come to our foundational world-picture by *reasoning* from this experience. That is *realism without empiricism*.[13] Our behaviour, our language and, our certainties are *conditioned* by the world we live in, indeed by regularities in the world – and that draws a *causal* connection, not a justificatory one. Our foundational hinges – the beliefs that make up the scaffolding of our language-games – are not *rationally*, but *causally* pegged in reality:

> Certain events would put me into a position in which I could not go on with the old language-game any further. In which I was torn away from the *sureness* of the game.
>
> Indeed, doesn't it seem obvious that the possibility of a language-game is conditioned by certain facts? (OC 617)

Wittgenstein's use of 'conditioned' (*bedingt*) is apt here, and anticipates his conclusion that 'a certain regularity in occurrences' (this harks back to 'certain facts' of the previous passage) makes *the possibility of* induction a logical, not an empirical matter:

> In that case it would seem as if the language-game must '*show*' the facts that make it possible. (But that's not how it is.)
>
> Then can one say that only a certain regularity in occurrences makes induction possible? The 'possible' would of course have to be '*logically possible*'. (OC 618)

To say that induction here can only be made *logically* possible (by a certain regularity in experience) is to say that, here, prediction or generalization are of a *logical*, not of a *rational* nature; that we do not *infer* that something will happen from the regularity in experience. We are not certain *for this or that reason* or *on the basis of this or that experience*: 'The difficulty is to realize the groundlessness of our believing' (OC 166). It is not *because* we have made sure that humans use language that the hinge: 'Humans use language' belongs to the scaffolding of our thoughts. Our certainty is conditioned, not justified, by the facts.[14] The 'because' of inference and reasoning must go, and with it vanishes the possibility of mistake.[15] Our expectation of recurrence is not based on reasoning, but on training or conditioning. This makes our expectation that 'Humans use language' as unreasoned and logical an expectation as that the sum of '2 + 2' is '4' (see OC 448 and 653). An expectation, if one can call it that, which is not *answerable* to reality (that is, not *grounded* in reality, not empirical) but is assumed in all we can ask or say of reality.[16] Any empirical enquiry has to take such 'regularities' as 'Humans use language', 'Humans die', or 'Human skulls are not stuffed with sawdust' as part of its *logical* starting points. Reality, biological and other facts, all contribute to the shaping of our concepts, and indeed to the determination of our foundational certainties, but the contribution is not an inferential one.

Wittgenstein is not an empiricist. He draws on experience, on reality, but he draws on it only as description,[17] and not in order to *explain* our form of life. Analogously, we, in our everyday skins do not live in the world as empiricists. Experience (what Wittgenstein means by 'realism' in RFM 325) is always there, but only in our epistemic and scientific moments do we use it as a *ground* or *reason* ('empiricism') for our beliefs. We mistakenly think that we come to the certainty that 'Babies do not kill' in the same way we come to a conclusion from reasoning. This confusion is due to our always assuming that some reasoning, inference, rationalization or justification had taken place where there had in fact been none: 'Opening the drawer, etc. happened so to speak automatically and got interpreted *subsequently*' (Z 8). We invoke a ghostly reasoning to explain even our most basic acts, but the only reasoning that occurs here is *ex post facto*; only ever an after-thought. Objective certainty is not the result of judgment; knowledge is. Knowledge is *grounded* in reality, in nature, in experience: 'It is always by favour of Nature that one *knows* something' (OC 505; my emphasis). *That* is empiricism; and it has everything to do with observation and evidence – 'Whether *I know* something depends on whether the evidence backs me up or contradicts me' – where objective certainty does not: 'to say one *knows* one has a pain means nothing' (OC 504; my emphasis). And in the same way that it is nonsensical to say 'I *know* I have a pain' as if I had deduced it from observation, it is nonsensical to say 'I *know* I exist' or 'I *know* external objects exist' for the same reason.

All that we expressly, attentively or explicitly learn is learned on a background of nonratiocinated certainty. Children could not be taught anatomy were it not for the unmentioned and ungrounded certainty that 'All human beings have bodies', that 'The basic structure of all human bodies is the same', and so on. Such unreasoned certainties constitute the backcloth of all our reasoned beliefs (OC 253). This is not to say that *some* of our hinges (e.g. 'I am a woman') could not be verified and confirmed (by someone other than myself),[18] simply that our own *default* assurance about them is not grounded on any reasoning or verification, be it our own or someone else's:

> That I am a man and not a woman can be verified, but if I were to say I was a woman, and then tried to explain the error by saying I hadn't checked the statement, the explanation would not be accepted. (OC 79)

Our 'world-picture' is 'the matter-of-course' and 'unmentioned' foundation of all our founded beliefs (OC 167). How do we come to have this foundation, if not epistemically or empirically? This will be discussed in Chapter 5. For now, suffice it to say that we do not as children *learn* these certainties the way we learn that the French Revolution began in 1789; these certainties are part of a *whole* world-picture which we *absorb* or *swallow*:

> [A child] doesn't learn *at all* that that mountain has existed for a long time: that is, the question whether it is so doesn't arise at all. It swallows this consequence down, so to speak, together with *what* it learns. (OC 143)

Our certainty is *embedded* in experience, not *grounded* in it. Like the axis around which a body rotates, our certainty is determined by the movement around it, but it is not empirically determined. In spite of Wittgenstein's reminders that philosophy's concern with our form of life is not to be confused with, and indeed *ought not to be*, a concern with empiricism – an injunction which finds its most succinct expression in the aphorism: 'Not empiricism and yet realism in philosophy, that is the hardest thing' (RFM 325) – commentators have persisted in equating Wittgenstein's 'realism' with empiricism. They have taken his 'realist' or anthropological picture of our foundations to be an *empirical* picture, thereby depriving those foundations of any logical status or validity.[19] Indeed, most Wittgenstein commentators have failed to recognize the nonempiricality of hinges. Amongst them, Peter Hacker who takes 'the *Weltbild* propositions of *On Certainty*' to be empirical propositions, albeit unfalsifiable ones.[20] But the notion of 'unfalsifiable empirical propositions' is tenuously close to being a contradiction in terms. An alternative would be to regard hinge propositions as the *last* empirical propositions we would renounce: propositions that we are simply *most* certain of, that get maximal credence on our epistemic continuum. This, however, is to confuse Wittgenstein with Quine. Hinge propositions do not

figure on our epistemic continuum at all. They are the supporting framework of our epistemic beliefs, not their crown:

> … one isn't trying to express even the greatest subjective certainty, but rather that certain propositions seem to underlie all questions and all thinking (OC 415)

This is what Wittgenstein means by *objective* certainty: it is not the result of thinking, it constitutes the very form of thinking.

Grammatical: hinges are rules of grammar, not empirical propositions

Empirical *and* logical?

> … the question is this: can we … distinguish two uses here? (RC III, 11)

In *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein revives the issue Moore thought he had resolved about the unquestionable certainty of some of our 'propositions'. He reviews the putative premise and conclusion of Moore's 'Proof of an External World' (1939) – 'Here is a hand' and 'There are external objects' – but we can better apprehend the scope of the type of 'proposition' in question by glimpsing Moore's list in 'A Defence of Common Sense' (1925):[21]

> There exists at present a living human body, which is *my* body. This body was born at a certain time in the past, and has existed continuously ever since, though not without undergoing changes; it was, for instance, much smaller when it was born, and for some time afterwards, than it is now. Ever since it was born, it has been either in contact with or not far from the surface of the earth; and, at every moment since it was born, there have also existed many other things, having shape and size in three dimensions …, from which it has been at various distances … (1925, 33)

The common feature of all these sentences is that they refer to the empirical world: to physical objects, events, interactions; and this makes them *seem* to be empirical propositions. But there is something else that these sentences share: they are unquestionable, indubitable and nonhypothetical. About all of these, we would say what we normally say of mathematical equations: 'Dispute about other things; *this* is immovable – it is a hinge on which your dispute can turn' (OC 655). Empirical *and* logical?

Passages in *On Certainty* point out this peculiarity about Moore-type certainties: that they seem to be *both* of a contingent and hypothetical nature *and* of an indubitable and nonhypothetical one. Here, Wittgenstein is at pains to understand the seeming *necessity* of some *empirical* propositions, their *logical status*, and wonders whether they could exemplify a peculiar

breed of something which has some features of necessary propositions and some features of contingent propositions.[22] We can briefly retrace Wittgenstein's path (keeping in mind that *I* am suggesting a progression where – typically – there is none in the text). He begins by noting a lack of homogeneity within the family of empirical propositions:

> It is clear that our empirical propositions do not all have the same status … (OC 167)
>
> Our 'empirical propositions' do not form a homogenous mass. (OC 213)

Wittgenstein is puzzled by the fact that some empirical propositions exhibit the features of rules; seem to be, not contingent at all, but *necessary*. They are 'general', 'count as certain for us', their *truth*[23] 'belongs to our frame of reference' (OC 273; 83). But whereas Moore in his 'Proof' treated them as empirical propositions and attempted to *prove* their indubitability, Wittgenstein views them as logical, and *presupposes* their indubitability. For Wittgenstein, then, these are indubitable not as in: *proved beyond the shadow of a doubt*, but as in: *not subject to doubt at all*. Wittgenstein considers nonsensical Moore's attempt at *proving* certainty with regard to such propositions because these are propositions that it makes no sense to *doubt* in the first place: they exhibit a priori features:

> When Moore says he knows such and such, he is really enumerating a lot of empirical propositions which we affirm without special testing; propositions, that is, which have a peculiar logical role in the system of our empirical propositions.[24] (OC 136)

Wittgenstein speaks nonetheless of this deviant or 'peculiar' strand as belonging to the family of empirical propositions. So that this peculiarity of some (apparently) empirical propositions prompts him to wonder about the sharpness of the distinction between the empirical and the logical: 'Is it that rule and empirical proposition merge into one another?' (OC 309). Wittgenstein's answer to this puzzling possibility will be negative: it is not that rule and empirical proposition merge into one another, but that what looks like an empirical proposition is not always one:

> That is, we are interested in the fact that about certain empirical propositions no doubt can exist if making judgments is to be possible at all. Or again: I am inclined to believe that not everything that has the form of an empirical proposition *is* one. (OC 308)

Here again, as is so common in our philosophical speculations, we have been misled by *form*. Some strings of words 'have the form of empirical propositions', but are *not* empirical propositions. This is reminiscent of the metaphysical propositions of the *Tractatus* that gave the misleading impression

of being propositions of super-physics, as Baker and Hacker put it (1992, 56), whilst being grammatical, as I put it (2004a). In *On Certainty*, these 'propositions' that masquerade as empirical propositions but in fact operate as grammatical rules are so-called hinge 'propositions':

> I want to say: propositions of the form of empirical propositions, and not only propositions of logic, form the foundation of all operating with thoughts (with language). (OC 401)

So where exactly does *On Certainty* leave us? Are 'hinges' propositions at all – empirical or otherwise?

The propositional versus the nonpropositional account

A passage in *On Certainty* leaves no doubt as to the nonpropositionality of our fundamental beliefs:

> Giving grounds, however, justifying the evidence, comes to an end; – but the end is not certain propositions' striking us immediately as true, i.e. it is not a kind of *seeing* on our part; it is our *acting*, which lies at the bottom of the language-game. (OC 204)

And yet it seems to contradict other passages which just as unambiguously refer to our fundamental beliefs as 'propositions'. The most famous being this:

> When Moore says he *knows* such and such, he is really enumerating a lot of empirical propositions which we affirm without special testing; propositions, that is, which have a peculiar logical role in the system of our empirical propositions. (OC 136)

This apparent inconsistency can be interpreted as:

1. incoherence on Wittgenstein's part;[25]
2. due to translation – 'Satz' is often rendered as 'proposition' rather than sentence;[26] or as not an inconsistency at all, but rather as indicative of:
3. there being two different accounts of *objective certainty* in *On Certainty*, signalling an evolution in Wittgenstein's thought;[27]
4. the practical aspect of Wittgenstein's (single) propositional account.[28]

On the last view, such passages as OC 204 are not envisaged as vying with the propositional account (e.g. OC 136), but are simply taken as indicating that certainty is a practical and not an epistemic mastery of basic propositions. Wittgenstein's references to 'propositions' have thus encouraged commentators to believe that objective certainty is a matter of our considering certain *propositions* as fundamental and indubitable. On this reading,

'hinge propositions' seem much like traditional axioms, albeit crucially differing in their mode of being *given* to us. Whereas Descartes' *cogito*, for instance, is immediately intelligible through introspection, Wittgenstein's 'hinge propositions' would be assimilated in a nonintellectual way. But they would still be, oddly enough, propositions.

In Avrum Stroll's view, Wittgenstein held both a propositional and a non-propositional account, but *consecutively*: 'The idea that some propositions are beyond doubt gradually gives way in *On Certainty* to a different, non-propositional account of certainty' (1994, 134). The earlier account 'clearly derives from Wittgenstein's response to Moore, who thinks of certainty in propositional terms' (1994, 146). So that

> … when Wittgenstein speaks of hinge *propositions* as immune to justification, proof, and so on, we are dealing with the earlier account. The second account is completely different. It begins to develop gradually as the text was being written and comes to dominate it as it closes. On this view, there are several candidates for F [foundations], and all of them are non-intellectual. Among these are *acting, being trained in communal practices, instinct*, and so on. (1994, 146)

But even in the earlier, so-called propositional account, Stroll notes Wittgenstein's departure from Moore and traditional foundationalism. Although Wittgenstein, following Moore, *does* speak of 'propositions', he does not really *mean* propositions, in the ordinary sense:

> … what Wittgenstein is calling *hinge propositions* are not ordinary propositions at all. Such concepts as being true or false, known or not known, justified or unjustified do not apply to them, and these are usually taken to be the defining features of propositions. So Wittgenstein is using a familiar term – for special reasons – to refer to something that is not a proposition at all. (1994, 146)

What is then that something which both Moore and Wittgenstein refer to as a 'proposition', but which Wittgenstein does not take to be a proposition, even within his propositional account? The answer is: a rule of grammar. Let us recall the paradigmatic 'propositional' passage above:

> When Moore says he *knows* such and such, he is really enumerating a lot of empirical propositions which we affirm without special testing; propositions, that is, which have a peculiar logical role in the system of our empirical propositions. (OC 136)

And Stroll does well to remind us that this is not Wittgenstein's first reference to such 'peculiar' empirico-logical propositions:

> … even in the *Tractatus* [Wittgenstein] had recognized that such locutions are not straightforwardly about the world. The term he used for their

> 'peculiar' status was 'pseudo-proposition'. Then later … he thought of these as 'logical insights' and/or as 'grammatical rules'. The concept of a 'hinge proposition' is his newest attempt to indicate their status. They are on this latest account proposition-like, and yet they are neither true nor false, not subject to evidence, proof, confirmation, or disconfirmation. They are thus not really propositions at all. (1994,146)

According to Stroll, then, even on the propositional account, Wittgenstein did not think of hinge 'propositions' as propositions, but as rules of grammar. Stroll's insights about *On Certainty* are formidable and their clear-sightedness is unprecedented, I suggest however the following two modifications to his account of Wittgenstein's intellectual struggle to understand the nature of objective certainty:

1. that there are moments, in this intellectual struggle, where Wittgenstein actually contemplates a genuine propositional account (e.g. 'There are countless general empirical propositions that count as certain for us' (OC 273)) – one that neither envisages a kind of hybrid proposition (OC 309), nor an apparently empirical proposition that actually plays a *logical role* (OC 136);
2. that we not think of Wittgenstein's 'propositional' and nonpropositional accounts as *consecutive*, but as indicative of an ongoing, nonlinear and nonprogressive struggle, throughout *On Certainty*, to understand the nature of our foundational beliefs.[29] A struggle whose outcome – that our basic beliefs are nonpropositional and (broadly) pragmatic – is not voiced as a final exhilarated Eureka! but as sporadic and recurrent insights dispersed throughout *On Certainty*, and best formulated in OC 204.

I think that Stroll's reason for envisaging *two* accounts may be the apparent difficulty in reconciling Wittgenstein's allusions to certainty as *grammatical rules* (on Stroll's view: the early, propositional account) to his allusions to certainty as a kind of acting, training or instinct (on Stroll's view: the later, nonpropositional account). But I believe this difficulty is resolved when one thinks of Wittgenstein's allusions to hinge 'propositions' as grammatical rules in terms of allusions to the *formulations* of a certainty whose only *occurrence* is a way of acting.

Hinges as *nonsense*

Hinges are not empirical propositions, and therefore, on Wittgenstein's view of the proposition (cf. Chapter 2) – not propositions at all:

> 'There are physical objects' is nonsense. Is it supposed to be an empirical proposition? (OC 35)
>
> 'A is a physical object' is a piece of instruction which we give only to someone who doesn't yet understand either what 'A' means, or what 'physical object' means. Thus it is instruction about the use of words, and

> 'physical object' is a logical concept. (Like colour, quantity, …) And that is why *no such proposition as: 'There are physical objects' can be formulated.* Yet we encounter such unsuccessful shots at every turn. (OC 36; my emphasis; see also Z 401)

'There are physical objects' is not a proposition; it is (like 'A is a physical object') a piece of instruction about the use of words – that is, a rule of grammar. Why then does Wittgenstein also call it nonsense? Nonsense is not a derogatory term for Wittgenstein; it is a technical term applied to strings of words that stand outside the bounds of sense – be they expressions of violations of rules, or *expressions of the rules themselves*.[30] Indeed, inasmuch as Wittgenstein holds only falsifiable propositions to have sense, grammatical rules (in that they are unfalsifiable) are nonsense. On Wittgenstein's view, 'Red is a colour' is as nonsensical as: 'Red is not a colour.' The latter is nonsense in that it contravenes a rule of grammar, the other in that it *is* a rule of grammar:

> … when we hear the two propositions, 'This rod has a length' and its negation 'This rod has no length', we take sides and favour the first sentence, instead of declaring them both nonsense [*Unsinn*]. But this partiality is based on a confusion: we regard the first proposition as verified (and the second as falsified) by the fact 'that the rod has a length of 4 meters'. (PG 129)

Twice in a letter to Ramsey, Wittgenstein writes: '*the negation of nonsense is nonsense*' (CL 2.7.1927). Here, Wittgenstein explicitly corrects the erroneous unilateral view of nonsense which holds that 'White is darker than black' is nonsense, but not its negation. As was noted in the last chapter, the later Wittgenstein will extend the scope of what has sense, but *not* to the point of including rules. As Jacques Bouveresse notes:

> [Wittgenstein] never went back on his idea that propositions which express grammatical or conceptual necessities really have no sense, because they have no meaningful negation. (1981, 93; my translation)

Indeed, according to G.E. Moore:

> … [Wittgenstein] certainly held that 'blue is primary' is a 'necessary proposition' – that we can't imagine its not being true – and that therefore, as he said, it 'has no sense'. (MWL 109)

And Moore also notes that Wittgenstein referred to sentences which express necessary propositions as both 'nonsensical' *and* 'rules of grammar' (MWL 65). For Wittgenstein, then, nonsense is not only what violates sense, but

also what defines it, demarcates it and, elucidates it. Wittgenstein calls 'There are physical objects' nonsense – as he would *all* hinges[31] (cf. 10, 461, 467, 500, 627) – because it is the expression of a rule of grammar: 'regarding it as absolutely solid is part of our *method* of doubt and enquiry' (OC 151).

Wittgenstein can also be seen inching towards his assimilation of hinges to rules of grammar in this comparison of hinges to rules, generally:

> The propositions describing this world-picture might be part of a kind of mythology. And their role is like that of rules of a game … (OC 95)

A rule is not the time- or experience-linked result of ratiocination, demonstration or proof. This, Wittgenstein also says of hinges: 'We don't, for example, arrive at any of them as a result of investigation' (OC 138). Hinges are not *objects* of enquiry but *rules* of enquiry, which we *take* and use unquestioningly (OC 87, 88). Though they may look like empirical propositions, their role is a logical one:

> When Moore says he *knows* such and such, he is really enumerating a lot of empirical propositions which we affirm without special testing; propositions, that is, which have *a peculiar logical role* in the system of our empirical propositions. (OC 136; latter emphasis mine)

And to envisage a *peculiar logical role* is, in Wittgenstein's view of things, to envisage a grammatical role, for a *necessary* connection is nothing but a *grammatical* connection.[32] Here now is Wittgenstein explicitly considering the assimilation of hinge propositions to *grammatical* or *logical* propositions:

> Now might not 'I *know*, I am not just surmising, that here is my hand'[33] be conceived of as a proposition of grammar? Hence *not* temporally. –
>
> But in that case isn't it like *this* one: 'I know, I am not just surmising, that I am seeing red'?
>
> And isn't the consequence 'So there are physical objects' like: 'So there are colours?' (OC 57)
>
> If 'I know etc.' is conceived as a grammatical proposition, of course the 'I' cannot be important. And it properly means 'There is no such thing as a doubt in this case' or 'The expression "I do not know" makes no sense in this case.' And of course it follows from this that 'I *know*' makes no sense either. (OC 58)
>
> 'I know' is here a *logical* insight. Only realism can't be proved by means of it. (OC 59)

Hinge 'propositions' function like norms of description, like statements that *cannot* be falsified by experience. And we know that a 'statement which

no experience will refute' is 'a statement of grammar' (AWL 16). I *cannot* be mistaken or be prey to an illusion or deception when I say (e.g. to someone on the telephone): 'I am sitting at my desk right now.' The logical impossibility of being mistaken does not result from my having made absolutely sure that I *am* sitting at my desk, from my having correctly described reality, but from my not having *described* it at all. 'I am sitting at my desk' *stands fast* for me, not as a description, or as a conclusion I have come to, but as an underived certainty. It acts like a rule or norm of description, part of the scaffolding of my descriptions, not their object. *That I am sitting at my desk right now* is a contingent fact, but that does not make 'I am sitting at my desk right now' into a falsifiable belief.

Hinges constitute a method which is unchallengingly assimilated, not a subject of consideration: 'fixed … removed from the traffic' (OC 210). It is their steadfastness and immobility that enable us to move, to engage in action and thought. Wittgenstein's endeavour to clarify the grammar of Moore-type propositions has brought him to this conclusion:

> So one might grant that Moore was right, if he is interpreted like this: a proposition saying that here is a physical object may have the same logical status as one saying that here is a red patch. (OC 53)

That is, a grammatical status. Moore-type propositions are expressions of grammatical rules.

From the *Tractatus* on, Wittgenstein struggled to establish the distinction between propositions and pseudopropositions – between what can be said and what can only be shown. This distinction becomes less rigid after the *Tractatus*, and also comes to gradually incorporate, or develop into, the distinction between what can be known and what can be objectively believed, what stands fast. The development finds its completion in *On Certainty*. 'Hinge propositions' should be seen as Wittgenstein's final version of pseudopropositions. Masquerading as propositions, they are uncovered as in fact belonging to the framework, the scaffolding of our thoughts, of our rightful propositions:

> Now it gives our way of looking at things, and our researches, their form. Perhaps it was once disputed. But perhaps, for unthinkable ages, it has belonged to the *scaffolding* of our thoughts. (OC 211)

The same image was used in the *Tractatus*: 'The propositions of logic describe the *scaffolding* of the world, or rather they represent it. They have no "subject-matter"' (6.124; my emphasis). The crucial difference is that the *scaffolding* of *On Certainty* is not that of the world, but only 'of our thoughts'.

Understanding hinges

It may be objected that seeing a hinge as a grammatical rule, and therefore as having no truth-value is inconsistent with understanding its parts as referring. The options available to us are:

1. no part of a hinge stands in any semantic relation: 'my hand' in 'This is my hand' does not refer to my hand;
2. parts of a hinge do refer; nevertheless the hinge itself is not true or false;
3. anyone who understands the expression of objective certainty has to understand the sort of semantic relation that its parts *do* have in other sentences;
4. the case is similar to that of secondary meaning: content, verbal expression and context are inseparable.

I would suggest the case of hinges is best described by option 3.[34] If I say in the middle of a conversation: 'I am here', the sentence has no truth-value because, pronounced in such circumstances, it has no informational, hypothetical or descriptive use. We *do* however understand the sentence, because we understand the sort of semantic relation that its parts have in other sentences, or indeed, in other uses of the same sentence:

> … if someone, in quite heterogeneous circumstances, called out with the most convincing mimicry: 'Down with him!', one might say of these words (and their tone) that they were *a pattern that does indeed have familiar applications*, but that in this case it was not even clear what *language* the man in question was speaking. (OC 350; first emphasis mine)
>
> If I say 'an hour ago this table didn't exist', I probably mean that it was only made later on.
>
> If I say 'this mountain didn't exist then', I presumably mean that it was only formed later on – perhaps by a volcano.
>
> If I say 'this mountain didn't exist half an hour ago', that is such a strange statement that it is not clear what I mean. Whether for example I mean something untrue but scientific. Perhaps you think that the statement that the mountain didn't exist then is quite clear, however one conceives the context. But suppose someone said 'This mountain didn't exist a minute ago, but an exactly similar one did instead'. *Only the accustomed context allows what is meant to come through clearly*. (OC 237; my emphasis)

Hinges, as I shall argue in the section, 'Hinges and their *doppelgänger*' in Chapter 8, have non-hinge *doppelgänger* – that is, twin sentences whose use is not grammatical but other – say, descriptive or expressive. We understand the use of a descriptive *doppelgänger* of a hinge (e.g. my saying 'I am here' as I walk into the house, so that my husband in the kitchen can be informed of my arrival), and thereby also understand the uselessness of its *doppelgänger* pronounced in circumstances that do not warrant its pronouncement.

It must however be stressed that *hinges* do not need to be understood in the stream of the language-game. A hinge is but the artificial formulation of a certainty whose defining feature is ineffability.

Ineffability: hinges go without saying

> Thus it seems to me that I have known something the whole time, and yet there is no meaning in saying so, in uttering this truth. (OC 466)

As was noted in the last section, nonsense is not a derogatory term for Wittgenstein; it is a technical term applied to (strings of) words that have no use *within* a language-game – that is, there is no *recognized context* or *circumstances* in which the expression functions. So that if someone says something, like 'I know that that's a tree' or 'Down with him!' or 'I wish you luck' 'out of all context' (this is Wittgenstein's expression: '*außer allem Zusammenhang*'; OC 349, 350, 465), these sentences are nonsense. Of course, there may prove to be a context – which was not immediately apparent or obvious – and once it is revealed, the sentences gain sense:

> In the middle of a conversation, someone says to me out of the blue: 'I wish you luck.' I am astonished; but later I realize that these words connect up with his thoughts about me. And now they do not strike me as meaningless any more. (OC 469)

If, however, no context is made available which would clarify the use or function of the sentence, it remains nonsensical:

> Someone says irrelevantly 'That's a tree'. He might say this sentence because he remembers having heard it in a similar situation; or he was suddenly struck by the tree's beauty and the sentence was an exclamation; or he was pronouncing the sentence to himself as a grammatical example; etc., etc. And now I ask him 'How did you mean that?' and he replies 'It was a piece of information directed at you'. Shouldn't I be at liberty to assume that he doesn't know what he is saying, if he is insane enough to want to give me this information? (OC 468)

Sentences expressed *out of all context* are nonsense because they stand in need of determination. Grammatical rules stand outside our language-games; not because they require determination, but because they make the game possible. They make sense possible, and do not therefore themselves *make sense*. As such (we have seen in Chapter 3) they do not bear saying *within the stream of the language-game* but only in heuristic situations, in situations where such rules of grammar are transmitted (through drill or

training) to a child, a disturbed adult, a foreign speaker or an alien;[35] or in philosophical discussion:

> The sentence 'I know that that's a tree' *if it were said outside its language-game*, might also be a quotation (from an English grammar-book perhaps). (OC 393)
>
> So if I say to someone 'I *know* that that's a tree', it is as if I told him 'that is a tree; you can absolutely rely on it; there is no doubt about it'. And *a philosopher could only use the statement to show that this form of speech is actually used*. But *if his use of it is not to be merely an observation about English grammar*, he must give the circumstances in which this expression functions. (OC 433; only *know* is emphasized in the original)

And Wittgenstein does suggest such circumstances:

> 'I know that that's a tree' – this may mean all sorts of things: I look at a plant that I take for a young beech and that someone else thinks is a black-currant. He says 'that is a shrub'; I say it is a tree. – We see something in the mist which one of us takes for a man, and the other says 'I know that that's a tree'. Someone wants to test my eyes etc. etc. (OC 349)

To formulate grammatical rules *within* the language-game – that is, in the flow of ordinary discourse – is to formulate bounds of sense as if they were descriptions or informative statements. This constitutes an intrusion in the game – the stating of a rule when no reminder was needed:

> If a forester goes into a wood with his men and says '*This* tree has got to be cut down, and *this* one and *this* one' – what if he then observes 'I *know* that that's a tree'? (OC 353)

That observation would be nonsensical – his men would wonder whether the forester was in his right mind. Similarly, if I were to say to the cloakroom attendant as I hand him my token: 'This is a token', he would look at me nonplussed. That is not information for him, so why am I saying it? Nothing warrants my saying it.[36] The information he requires in order to retrieve my coat is not that this is a token, but what the number on the token is. *That this is a token* is the ineffable hinge upon which his looking for the number on the token revolves. Our shared certainty that 'this is a token' can only *show* itself in our normal *transaction* with the token; it cannot *qua certainty* be meaningfully *said*. To *say* a hinge in an ordinary context is to suggest that it does not *go without saying*, that it needs support, grounding, context. To say a hinge within the language-game invariably *arrests* the game, produces a caesura, a hiatus in the game. Conversely, think of the fluidity of the game poised on its invisible hinges: I hand the attendant my token, he glances at

the number on it and fetches my coat. Our foundational certainty is operative only *in action*, not in words. This is well conveyed by Wittgenstein's image of a certainty which is like a *taking hold* or a grasp:

> It is just like directly taking hold of something, as I take hold of my towel without having doubts. (OC 510)
>
> And yet this direct taking-hold corresponds to a *sureness*, not to a knowing. (OC 511)

A sureness which, unlike a knowing, does not originate in doubt or hesitation and which has the characteristics of a reflex action, of an automatism, of an instinct, is altogether foreign to *thought*. And this *thoughtlessness* – that which forms the basis of thought (OC 411), and is therefore itself *not* (a) thought – is also a *wordlessness*, a *going without saying*:

> I believe that I had great-grandparents, that the people who gave themselves out as my parents really were my parents, etc. This belief may never have been expressed; even the thought that it was so, never thought. (OC 159)

Our hinge certainties *go without saying*. This, far from undervaluing them, suggests their essential appurtenance to our lives: 'what we expect with certainty is essential to our whole life' (RFM 253).

To stress the ineffability of hinges is not merely to point out the superfluity of saying what (in normal circumstances) is *already certain* and whose articulation would be idle repetition, it is to underline the *logical* unsayability of hinges. A hinge *cannot* be meaningfully articulated other than in a heuristic situation – that is, *as a grammatical rule*. Only in such contexts, is it plainly not offered as a hypothesis, but *pointed at* as a rule, an enabler. As we have noted, sentences identical to hinges but that do not function as hinges – nongrammatical *doppelgänger* of hinges – *can* be meaningfully articulated *within* the stream of the language-game.

Sayability is internally linked to *use*; that is, to the existence of a *context* (or circumstances, or a situation) warranting meaningful articulation in a language-game. I am not here making the case for the obvious presence in *On Certainty* of *meaning is use*, but for the less obvious one of *saying is use:*

> Just as the words 'I am here' have a meaning only in certain contexts, and not when I *say* them to someone who is sitting in front of me and sees me clearly, – and not because they are superfluous, but because their meaning is not *determined* by the situation, yet stands in need of such determination. (OC 348; first emphasis mine)

In certain contexts, the words 'I am here' *are* sayable. In other contexts, where the same words do no work, they are useless, and therefore

meaningless. *Sayability* is a matter of having a use or a point in the game. *In the stream of the language-game*, only the *propositional and expressive doppelgänger* of a hinge can be meaningfully said, not the hinge itself. The hinge is 'fixed and … removed from the traffic' (OC 210) – that is, it *enables, makes possible, but does not belong to* the game. When Moore attempted to *say* what can only be shown – for example, 'Here is a hand' – he was really articulating nonsense. That is, he was articulating a bound of sense, as if it were an *object* of sense; as if it were a piece of information susceptible of being true or false. For Wittgenstein, then, grammatical rules can only be said (or, technically speaking, voiced) *outside a language-game*; within a game, they can only *show* themselves.[37] As von Wright suggests: Wittgenstein's 'criticism of Moore in *On Certainty* we could, in the language of the *Tractatus*, characterize as a criticism of an attempt to say the unsayable' (1972, 176).

It seems counterintuitive to think of sentences such as 'I am here' or 'I know that's a tree' as ineffable. The key is not to confuse 'ineffable' with 'unspeakable' or 'nonverbalizable', and to remember that these sentences are not ineffable in all their uses. Identical sentences can have different *uses* and therefore different *statuses*. It is not because a certain combination of words is *sayable* and *falsifiable* in one context or use, that it is *sayable* and *falsifiable* in another. Hinges are grammatical rules and are as such ineffable; they can only *show* themselves. And *showing*, for the post-Tractarian Wittgenstein, has do to with *acting*:

> 'I know that this room is on the second floor, that behind the door a short landing leads to the stairs, and so on.' One could imagine *cases where I should come out with this*, but they would be extremely rare. But on the other hand I shew this knowledge[38] day in, day out by my actions and also in what I say. (OC 431; my emphasis)
>
> 'I know all that.' And that will come out in the way I act and in the way I speak about the things in question. (OC 395)

Enacted: hinges can manifest themselves only in action

When Wittgenstein writes that it is 'acting' that lies at the bottom of the language game (OC 204), he does not mean to suggest that 'the facts of our natural history' – that is, our form of life – are our foundational basis, but to underline the *enacted* nature of our fundamental beliefs, and to suggest that our form of life conditions those beliefs, though it does not justify them. The confusion is due to the following passage, in which Wittgenstein tries equating our objective certainty to 'a form of life':

> Now I would like to regard this certainty, not as something akin to hastiness or superficiality, but as a form of life. (That is very badly expressed and probably badly thought as well.) (OC 358)

That is, indeed, very badly expressed. What Wittgenstein has been attempting to say is *not* that objective certainty is a form of life, but that it is akin to something nonpropositional, such as a form of life. Akin to something not of the order of justification, reason or thought, but of the order of thoughtlessness, automatism or animality. And in the next passage, he says just that:

> But that means I want to conceive it as something that lies beyond being justified or unjustified; as it were, as something animal. (OC 359)

Objective certainty is not a form of life, but a kind of belief, a kind of animal, unreasoned, unhesitating belief. A belief that cannot meaningfully be *said*, but only *enacted, exhibited* or *shown*:

> I KNOW that this is my foot. I could not accept any experience as proof to the contrary. – That may be an exclamation; but what *follows* from it? At least that I shall act with a certainty that knows no doubt, in accordance with my belief. (OC 360)

The burden of Wittgenstein's last work is to make sense of a certainty that a propositional rendering reduces to nonsense. According to Wittgenstein, writes David Bloor:

> … our language games are built on a level of response which does not have the form of an interpretation. We must say the agreement involved here is not mediated by meanings, but must be automatic. Odd though it may sound, it will be agreement without any propositional content, that is, agreement in actions. (RFM VI: 39, cf. PI: 241) (1997, 71–2)

Wittgenstein stresses that it is 'our *acting*' that lies 'at the bottom of the language game', and 'not certain propositions' striking us immediately as true. Hinges are not fundamental propositions occurring as necessary representational or intellectual antecedents to our thinking and acting. Objective certainty is not a matter of propositions or intellection – not a theoretical attitude – but is assimilated to a practical *attitude*:

> The *belief* that fire will burn me is of the same kind as the *fear* that it will burn me. (PI 473; my emphasis)

Hinge certainty is not thought out but acted out. As G.H. von Wright puts it:

> Considering the way language is taught and learned, the fragments of a world-picture underlying the uses of language are not originally and strictly *propositions* at all. The pre-knowledge is not propositional

> knowledge. But if this foundation is not propositional, what then *is* it? It is, one could say, a *praxis*. (1982, 178)

Unlike run-of-the-mill belief, *hinge* certainty is a *nonpropositional attitude*:

> Children do not *learn that* books exist, that armchairs exist, etc. etc., – they learn to *fetch* books, *sit* in armchairs, etc. etc. (OC 476; my emphasis)[39]

Hinge certainty takes the form of spontaneous *acting in the certainty of*… an innumerable number of things. It is, as we have seen, much like an unself-conscious *savoir-faire*, a flawless *know-how*.[40] To describe the certainty that willy-nilly underlies our thoughts and actions, I would need convey the poised, streaming fluency with which we carry out all our basic transactions with the world. It is an *embodied*, an *enacted* certainty, exhibiting itself in the ongoing smoothness of our normal, *basic* operating in the world. This certainty is *in the showing, not in the saying*. Moore's *saying* 'I know that "here is a hand" ' conveyed no certainty that was not already *visible* in his speaking about his hand, in his ostensibly showing it to his audience, or simply in his unselfconsciously using it. Our hinge certainty that 'Tables, chairs, pots and pans don't think' shows itself in our *treating* them as unthinking, inanimate objects. Our hinge certainty that 'There are physical objects' shows itself in our *reaching out* to pick a flower, but not a thought. Hinges are grammatical rules, but they are rules *in action; logic in action*:

> That is to say, it belongs to the logic of our scientific investigations that certain things are *in deed* not doubted. (OC 342)

In deed (*in der Tat*), certain things are not doubted. Logic is embedded in our practices – in our *deeds*. Our life, *our deeds*, show that we do not, *cannot* doubt some things if we are to make sense. Certainty here is not an option – it belongs to th*e logic* of our investigations. That is, if we were *in deed* (*in der Tat*) to doubt, it would *not* be a manifestation of uncertainty, but of nonsense or madness (cf. section, 'The delusion of doubt' in Chapter 8).

Grammatical rules determine our correct use of language. To consider all hinges as grammatical rules is to envisage grammatical rules as more than *explicit* instructions or conventions for our use of words. They are, more generally, bounds of sense, that can be either instinctive or acquired. But it will facilitate our understanding of the *origin* of hinges, if we first attempt their taxonomy.

5
Types and Origins of Hinges

Not a case of family resemblance

Wittgenstein does not always find it easy to set hinges apart from some of our epistemic beliefs:

> Is it not difficult to distinguish between the cases in which I cannot and those in which I can *hardly* be mistaken? Is it always clear to which kind a case belongs? I believe not. (OC 673)

But this difficulty is not pervasive: there are cases where it is clear that it is hinges we are dealing with. These cases, however, are themselves multifarious, and Wittgenstein indicates that objective certainty is a family resemblance concept:

> There are, however, certain types of case in which I rightly say I cannot be making a mistake, and Moore has given a few examples of such cases.
>
> I can enumerate various typical cases, but not give any common characteristic. (N.N. cannot be mistaken about his having flown from America to England a few days ago. Only if he is mad can he take anything else to be possible.) (OC 674)

No common characteristic. And yet, in Chapter 4, I have listed precisely that: characteristics or features common to all hinges; features that I have extracted from the remarks of *On Certainty*. But *On Certainty*, it must again be stressed, is a *work in progress*, and much can be culled from it that Wittgenstein did not himself gather. He did not refine his awareness of the multifariousness of hinges into the insight that this multifariousness does not prevent them from sharing the same features, though it may prevent their sharing them all *in the same way*. So that while all hinges are foundational – that is, our certainty regarding them is not empirically or epistemically *justified* – some are, as we shall see, *universally* foundational, others only

locally and others still only *personally* foundational. And while some of our hinges are *disposable* or *giveupable*, others are *ungiveupable*.[1] Also, though all hinges are ungrounded, some are *instinctive* while others are *acquired*. In this chapter, I propose a *taxonomy* of hinges and I consider their *origin*. In Chapters 6 and 7, I will further describe each class of hinges listed here.

A striated bedrock

There are differences within the category of our hinges. As Avrum Stroll notes: 'Wittgenstein's foundationalism … differs from those of the tradition in being striated' (1994, 181). P.F. Strawson points out, however, that Wittgenstein gives us no 'principle of distinction' (1985, 18) within the class of hinges. No *principle* – typically enough – but *distinctions* he does give. He acknowledges a dichotomy between those hinges that we would be ready to give up, and those that we *can never* give up if we are to retain the possibility of making sense:

> If I now say 'I know that the water in the kettle on the gas-flame will not freeze but boil', I seem to be as justified in this 'I know' as I am in *any*. 'If I know anything I know *this*'. – Or do I know with still *greater* certainty that the person opposite me is my old friend so-and-so? And how does that compare with the proposition that I am seeing with two *eyes* and shall see them if I look in the glass? – I don't know confidently what I am to answer here. – *But still there is a difference between the cases*. If the water over the gas freezes, of course I shall be as astonished as can be, but I shall assume some factor I don't know of, and perhaps leave the matter to physicists to judge. But what could make me doubt whether this person here is N.N., whom I have known for years? Here a doubt would seem to drag everything with it and plunge it into chaos. (OC 613; last emphasis mine)

All our hinges are grammatical rules. They are not empirical conclusions but delimit our bounds of sense. As such, they cannot be falsified but they can be abandoned, become obsolete: what was once considered foundational may no longer be. Hinges are all foundational, but they differ: some are giveupable, others ungiveupable. It must be stressed that a hinge's being giveupable does not mean that it is falsifiable, or that it is less of a hinge *whilst a hinge*. I take a hinge to be ungiveupable where no circumstances would induce a normal individual to give it up at any time; where '[h]ere a doubt would seem to drag everything with it and plunge it into chaos' (OC 613).

A taxonomy of hinges

I have surveyed the hinges invoked by Wittgenstein in *On Certainty*,[2] and suggest they are best classified as follows (examples are all taken from *On Certainty*). This classification is *not* Wittgenstein's – it aims to bring

together the variegated examples of hinges used in *On Certainty* into a more manageable, and more perspicuous, presentation:

Linguistic hinges: For example, *'2 + 2 = 4', 'What the colour of human blood is called', 'What is called "a slab"/"a pillar" ', 'Which colour is meant by the word blue', 'This colour is called blue/green (in English)', 'The words composing this sentence are English', 'A is a physical object'* (OC 455, 340, 565, 545, 126, 624,158, 36).

Here, hinges are *strictly* grammatical rules that precisely define our use of individual words and of numbers. So as to differentiate it from the generic class of *grammatical rules*, I call this species of hinges: *linguistic*.

Personal hinges: For example, *'I come from such and such a city', 'For months I have lived at address A', 'I am now sitting in a chair', 'I am in England', 'I have never been in Bulgaria/Asia Minor', 'I have never been on the moon', 'I have just had lunch', 'The person opposite me is my old friend so and so'* (OC 67, 70, 552–3, 421, 269, 419, 111, 659, 613).

Here, hinges have to do with our individual lives. I will discriminate between *personal hinges* that are *autobiographical* and others that are *perceptual*; the latter dividing further into *external perception* and *autoperception*.[3] Generally, *personal hinge*s are either idiosyncratically or universally foundational. The hinge 'I am sitting at my desk' is idiosyncratically foundational; whereas 'I have a body' or 'I am here now' can be said to be universally foundational because such a certainty holds for each of us. There are other hinges which – though articulated as personal hinges (e.g. 'I have a brain') – are neither autobiographical nor perceptual; they are first-person versions of *universal* hinges, and are therefore classified as such below.

Local hinges: For example, *'There is an island, Australia', 'No one was ever on the moon', 'It isn't possible to get to the moon', 'The earth is round', 'Trains normally arrive in a railway station'* (OC 159, 106, 106, 291, 339).

Here, certainties constitute the underlying framework of knowledge of all or only some human beings at a given time (e.g. 'The earth is flat'; 'The earth is round'; 'Human beings cannot go to the moon'; 'Human beings can go to the moon'). Some of these hinges (e.g. 'Human beings can go to the moon') have an empirical origin, but – we shall see how in the next chapter – they shed their empirical nature upon entering bedrock. Others (e.g. 'Human beings cannot go to the moon') have been ousted from the bedrock of some human beings. Not all our local hinges are giveupable; such hinges as 'Human beings have been on the moon' are not.

Universal hinges: For example, *'The earth exists', 'There are physical objects', 'Things don't systematically disappear when we're not looking', 'If someone's head is cut off, the person will be dead and not live again', 'Trees do not gradually change into men and men into trees', 'I have a brain', 'I am a human being', 'I have forbears'* (OC 209, 35–6, 234, 274, 513,159, 4. 234).

Universal hinges delimit the universal bounds of sense for us: they are *ungiveupable* certainties for all normal human beings. I will address the possible objection that some normal human beings may not share some universal hinges in Chapter 8.

Peter Hacker defines grammatical rules as: 'rules for the use of words, in particular those rules that determine sense, which are settled antecedently to questions of truth and falsehood (PG 88)' (1996a, 70). To say that the first subset of hinges – what I have called *linguistic hinges* – are grammatical rules is not problematic. They are what Wittgenstein, before *On Certainty* and after the *Tractatus*, had been calling grammatical rules. These are not themselves an object of analysis in *On Certainty*, but are mentioned as a benchmark against which the more problematic grammatical or logical nature of the other three types of hinges is measured.[4] What I have called *personal hinges* make up part of the logical bedrock *of the speaker*, in normal circumstances. That they are idiosyncratic does not preclude *personal hinge*s from being logically necessary – that is, unfalsifiable bounds of sense – for an individual; for, as we shall see, like all other hinges, *personal hinges* are not empirically or epistemically grounded.[5] *Local hinges* are grammatical rules for a community of people at a given time: 'The earth is round' is an example of a grammatical rule that started out as an empirical proposition and fused into the language, as it were.[6] *Universal* hinges are hinges on which the belief system of every normal human being from the age of, say, three, is poised. Like *personal hinge*s, these appear to be conclusions that the speaker has come to from observation but in fact make up the *necessary*, that is, *grammatical* basis of our observations. Universal hinges belong to the *grammar* of our language-games about our human form of life. We might say that they constitute our 'universal grammar': the conditions of sense for any human being. A 'universal grammar' which, unlike that of Chomsky, is *not* a genetic endowment, *not* in the mind/brain.

'We might call a proposition like "There is no greenish red" a law of thought' said Wittgenstein in 1939 (LFM 235), but does he now really also suggest that we do the same with sentences like *'Here is hand', 'I am sitting here', 'The world exists', 'Things don't systematically disappear when we're not looking'*? Can such sentences also be *laws of thought*? This depends both on the role these strings of words play in our language-games, and on what we call laws of thought. I take laws of thought, as Wittgenstein does, to be rules of grammar (rules that delimit or condition our making sense), and I will attempt to show that Wittgenstein's consideration of *all* hinges as *rules of grammar* is justified. The last three sets of hinges – which can be referred to as: 'nonlinguistic hinges' – might not appear to be plausible candidates for the role of grammatical rules, but we must remember that status is not determined by appearance but by use. Still, for nonlinguistic hinges to be regarded as 'grammatical rules', we must be careful not to restrict our

definition of grammatical rules unduly – they are not only rules for the use of specific words. Rather:

> What belongs to grammar are all the *conditions* (the *method*) necessary for comparing the proposition with reality. That is, all the *conditions* necessary for the understanding (of the sense). (PG, p. 88; my emphasis)

A grammatical rule need not be as obvious as, 'The colour of human blood is (called) red.' A grammatical rule may not *look* like one, but it *is* one as long as it 'gives our way of looking at things, and our researches, their *form*', as long as it belongs to 'the *scaffolding* of our thoughts' (OC 211). This is indeed how Wittgenstein describes Moore-type propositions:

> I should like to say: Moore does not *know* what he asserts he knows, but it stands fast for him, as also for me; regarding it as absolutely solid is part of our *method* of doubt and enquiry. (OC 151)

Before making a detailed examination of the different types of hinges, we must finish sketching the big picture. Where, we must ask, do our hinges come from?

Origin of hinges: hinges are natural (instinctive) or acquired (conditioned)

We have seen that our fundamental certainty is akin to something which is not of the order of knowing, justification, reason or reflection. But if we do not acquire them epistemically or empirically, how are we graced, then, with our basic or *hinge* certainties? In one of two ways: naturally or through *nonepistemic* assimilation.

Some of our *hinges* are 'there like our life' (OC 559); they are a *natural*, animal-like or instinctual certainty that is never taught, or even articulated *as such*[7] – for example, 'I have a body', 'There exist people other than myself', 'Humans cannot vanish into thin air'. Here, *to be certain* does not imply that one can formulate the sentences or even understand the words that compose them. A one-year-old child not yet in possession of language shows that she is endowed with such certainties by using her body, interacting with others, running away from a barking dog rather than sitting there waiting to vanish, and so on. Other hinges are *acquired*, but it is crucial to note that where hinges are acquired, they are – like all rules – acquired through some form of training, not propositional learning:

> Children do not *learn that* books exist, that armchairs exist, etc. etc., – they learn to *fetch* books, *sit* in armchairs, etc. etc. (OC 476; my emphasis)

(The similarity here with *animal* training is not fortuitous.) Acquired hinges can be *explicitly* acquired, through cultural or educational *training* (most of

our *linguistic* hinges are acquired in this way), or *implicitly* assimilated – that is, without any training and often no formulation at all – through something like *repeated exposure* (e.g. 'People sometimes lie'). Whatever their origin – whether they are explicitly acquired as grammatical rules or not – all hinges *function* as grammatical rules: they *condition* our making sense. This highlights the variegated nature of what, with Wittgenstein, we have come to call: *grammar*. Grammar is not always verbalized or explicitly taught, it is often grasped unawares (and of course, used unawares), and its rules often do not look like rules. The sentence, 'There exist people other than myself' though it may not look like a grammatical rule, *is* one: it is (the verbalized expression of) one of the grammatical *conditions* necessary for the use and understanding of the sense of such descriptive or informative statements as: 'The world's population doubled between 1950 and 1990'. In the same way that our speaking about a rod (e.g. 'Cut this rod in half!') is conditioned by the grammatical rule: 'A rod has a length'. And neither of these rules need ever have been explicitly formulated to be operative.

None of our hinges are grounded, but some are acquired whilst others are there naturally. The latter resemble instinctive[8] beliefs that have never required any form of explicit articulation; the former have had to be prompted – through instruction, training or repeated exposure. Norman Malcolm's discussion of 'the "instinctive" element in the employment of language and language-like activities' (1982, 80) will help me develop the important dichotomy I would like to draw between instinctive and conditioned hinges. Malcolm equates 'absence of doubt' with 'instinctive' in two senses of the word. He refers to that absence of doubt which *precedes* any learning as 'instinctive' in the primary sense; whilst absence of doubt in a prelinguistic child's *responding* to orders and in a child's use of language is 'instinctive' in the secondary sense:

> Absence of doubt manifests itself throughout the normal life of a human being. It appears, first, in advance of any learning: For example, in the spontaneous behavior of reacting to a cause. This behavior is 'instinctive' in the primary sense of the word. Second, it appears in the young child when it is taught to respond to orders such as 'Sit in the chair', 'Hold out your hands', and so on, before the child can itself employ words. Third, it appears in the behavior, due to teaching, of employing the name of objects. At the second and third levels, the confident way of acting and speaking could be called 'instinctive' in a secondary sense.
>
> The absence of doubt, at all three levels, can be called 'instinctive' because it isn't *learned*, and because it isn't the product of thinking. (1982, 79)

The absence of doubt that Malcolm is talking about is never the product of thinking, and never *directly* due to teaching; it appears either instinctively ('instinctive in the primary sense') or may be acquired *through* teaching

('instinctive in the secondary sense'). In the latter case, our confident way of acting and speaking is not itself taught, but is generated *through* teaching or training, and shows itself when the prelinguistic child responds to orders and, later, when the child uses words to refer to objects. Malcolm extends the existence of this unreasoned absence of doubt to beyond our first learning of words:

> What is striking is not only that one's first learning of words is an outgrowth of unthinking, instinctive behaviour, but that something of the same kind permeates and surrounds all human acting and all use of language, even at sophisticated levels. (1982, 81)

Malcolm's distinction between the primary and the secondary sense of 'instinctive' is crucial, but his retaining the term 'instinctive' for the two uses fails to bring out both the distinction and its importance. It fails to underscore the *provoked origin* of what he calls 'instinctive in the secondary sense'. Malcolm is here rightly endeavouring to distinguish between a natural, spontaneous, animal-like and *instinctive* confidence, and one which, though it is just as unreasoned as the first, has nevertheless been prompted. In the latter case, the confidence results from training. It is not a naturally instinctive confidence, but a *conditioned* confidence. The distinction I would like to draw, then, is best formulated in terms of hinges that are *instinctive* (come naturally, unprompted) and those that are *conditioned* (have required some sort of prompting). It is important to make the distinction if we are to see that the *ontogenetically* primitive is not the only notion of primitivity in question here, nor indeed, the privileged notion. Training and repeated exposure produce a *conditioned*, not a *reasoned* certainty, so that being *acquired* does not make some hinges less automatic or thoughtless, and hence any less 'primitive' than instinctive or natural hinges. Acquired hinges are like *conditioned* reflexes. Chart 5.1 outlines the tenacity and origin of our hinges.

It should be noted that the distinction between instinctive and conditioned hinges is skew to the distinction between ungiveupable and

HINGES

ALL foundational

(1) linguistic	(2) personal	(3) local	(4) universal
giveupable	some giveupable some ungiveupable	some giveupable some ungiveupable	ungiveupable
conditioned	some conditioned some instinctive	some conditioned some instinctive	some conditioned some instinctive

Chart 5.1 Origin and tenacity of hinges

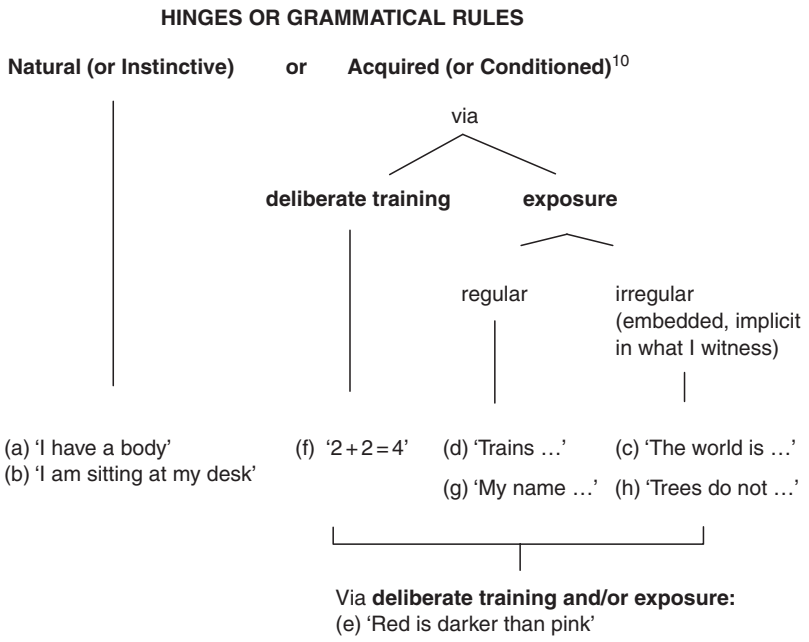

Chart 5.2 Origins of hinges

giveupable hinges, for many of our conditioned hinges are ungiveupable. Local ungiveupability pertains mostly to those of our local hinges that have to do with the past.[9]

Chart 5.2 (above) delineates the various origins of hinges or grammatical rules, using the following (representative) examples:

(a) 'I have a body'
(b) 'I am sitting at my desk'
(c) 'The world is more than 5 minutes old'
(d) 'Trains arrive in train stations'
(e) 'Red is darker than pink'
(f) '2 + 2 = 4'
(g) 'My name is DM-S'
(h) 'Trees do not turn into men and vice-versa'.

Natural (or instinctive) hinges

> Of course it is not by argument that we originally come by our belief in an independent external world. We find this belief ready in ourselves as soon as we begin to reflect: it is what may be called an *instinctive* belief.
>
> Bertrand Russell 1912, *The Problems of Philosophy*

Some hinges are never so much as *heuristically* articulated, never normally encountered in any pedagogical context or verbal guise. No focused attention or intervention of any sort was needed at any point in the history of a normal individual[11] to produce the hinges: 'I have a body', 'Hands do not disappear when we don't pay attention to them', 'People do not grow out of the earth', 'My words mean'. These hinges are natural or instinctive; they do not require even the slightest heuristic formulation. They constitute the genuinely *animal* certainty that Wittgenstein refers to in the following passage:

> I want to regard man here as an animal; as a primitive being to which one grants instinct but not ratiocination. As a creature in a primitive state. (OC 475)

I have never learned that 'I have a body', nor have I paused to consider, check or, test whether I had a body. My certainty about having a body did not await propositional formulation or any kind of focused awareness at all. It is an instinctive, animal certainty that *goes with* having a body. I am certain of having a body in that I live and act *embodied*: I *use* my hands, speak, walk and eat. Along with and underlying every empirical proposition we are taught, we take for granted – without testing or questioning, but also without so much as training – a host of such nonpropositional certainties. There is no reason to teach a normal child any of these:

> One man is a convinced realist, another a convinced idealist and teaches his children accordingly. In such an important matter as the existence or the non-existence of the external world they don't want to teach their children anything wrong.
>
> What will the children be taught? To include in what they say: 'There are physical objects' or the opposite?
>
> If someone does not believe in fairies, he does not need to teach his children 'There are no fairies': he can omit to teach them the word 'fairy'. On what occasion are they to say: 'There are …' or 'There are no …'? Only when they meet people of the contrary belief. (Z 413)

What would be the good of teaching children something they and every other normal human being already take for granted? Who would think of teaching a child that she has a body or that she can expect the house she lives in to be in the same place when she returns from school?

All of our *instinctive* hinges are akin to natural reflexes, most immediately reminiscent of our primitive, our animal nature, but this does not make them any more automatic than our conditioned beliefs.

Acquired (or conditioned) hinges

> Understanding is effected by explanation; but also by training. (Z 186)

Not all hinges are instinctive; some have required assimilation. When acquired, however, hinges are acquired the way we acquire skills or habits: through training or repeated exposure, not through propositional learning. And this nonpropositional acquisition can either be explicit or implicit. Nigel Pleasants differentiates between skills learnt *under a description* or *during a definite training period*, and those not thus learnt:

> … skilful activities involve those skills that are taught or learnt during a definite training period – they can be described as, and the novice knows them as, 'learning to ride a bicycle', 'learning to count', etc. In this sense, they are learnt 'explicitly'. By contrast, the 'skills' of social interaction [for example] do not have a clearly identifiable training period, and they are neither described as, nor known by the novice as, 'learning the rules of turn-taking, semantics, politeness', etc. (1996, 246)

What Pleasants refers to as skills learnt *explicitly* or *under a description*, I refer to as learnt through *training* or *deliberate repetition*; what he describes as skills learnt *implicitly*, I refer to as assimilated through *repeated exposure* or *natural repetition*.

Training

> I cannot describe how (in general) to employ rules, except by *teaching* you, *training* you to employ rules.
>
> (Z 318)

Basic initiation into our form of life is a *training*,[12] not a reasoning: '"Any explanation has its foundation in training." (Educators ought to remember this)' (Z 419). As David Bloor puts it:

> At the basic level … teaching does not proceed by explanation, and hence escapes the sequential and linear requirements of definition. It is concrete and holistic, exploiting a form of trust that does not require each step to be justified in turn, and where the learner is prepared to understand the earlier in terms of the later. (1997, 47)

And in *following rules*, we do not appeal to an internalized or stored rule, but respond *instinctively* to this training. Bloor writes:

> Given our biological make up, if we are shown three or four samples of a colour, and perhaps some samples of other colours to define the boundary, then for many purposes we can be sent off to fetch an object of a colour that matches it. We can learn the rule for 'red' in this way. Similarly we can be shown two objects, say two nuts, and on being told 'that's two', find it a perfectly adequate definition (PI 28). This is possible because we instinctively generalise. Under certain conditions we spontaneously take ourselves to be encountering the same thing again which we

> 'recognise' in the sense of treating it as similar to previous instances of (what we take to be) this kind. We take something as red (again) or two (again). We don't need to have any 'criterion' or justification for deciding this is 'the *same*' again: we just react in this way. (RFM VII: 40) (1997, 13)

We do not reason or infer, but have 'instinctive responses to the examples used in teaching' (1997, 13):

> There is no rational basis for this, nor one that can ever be formulated in terms of propositions assented to by the rule follower. There are no assumptions or presuppositions or hypotheses or interpretations or 'meanings' that are attached to the examples. … We go on from our training in the way we do because we have a set of dispositions or tendencies that happen to be activated in this way by the examples used in training. (1997, 14)

Kevin Mulligan reminds us of the importance for Bühler and Scheler, but also for Wittgenstein, of the notion of *training* and its interplay with instinct in learning. Particularly in the learning of rules: 'rules are mastered via a process of inculcation which involves our deepest drives and instincts and blind learning' (Typescript, 125). Teaching a child that 'This is a chair' is analogous to teaching it to walk or eat with a spoon. Analogous also to taming an animal, '[c]hildren do not learn that books exist, that armchairs exist, etc. etc., – they learn to fetch books, sit in armchairs, etc. etc.' (OC 476). When we learn rules, we do not learn a content but a technique, a skill, a method: *how to proceed*. A rule is transmitted to a child as something it can *go* on: an enabler. The same way the child is physically propped up and taught to walk. Like rules or instructions that a coach gives a novice in the teaching of a game, these are handed down as the only acceptable *moves* in a game, not open to discussion or stemming from it. Having no rationale other than that of enabling us to play the game, the rules are not presented as problems to solve. Upon being told that 'This is a chair' or that 'The ace has such-and-such a value in blackjack', we do not ponder but register. Considering these basic *givens* as requiring justification would only hinder us from playing. The certainty with which parents or teachers show us, teach us or make us alert to anything merely fortifies what is already a basic or innate or instinctive trust.[13] Indeed, belief is what comes first, not doubt: 'For how can a child immediately doubt what it is taught? That could mean only that he was incapable of learning certain language games' and 'a language game is only possible if one trusts something' (OC 283; 509). Unconditional absorption is possible because the child's natural attitude to the rules that are handed down to it is the same as its attitude to the milk it is fed: it swallows them whole – or with hardly a hiccup. Here, learning is blind; our eyes are shut (PI 224). Of course, inquisitive or recalcitrant children demand explanation for rules, but the questioning invariably finds

its natural halt in the teacher's pronouncement of such words as: 'That's just how it is.'

Repeated exposure: a coherent Weltbild

Acquired hinges are made to stand fast either through deliberate repetition (training) or through natural repetition (repeated exposure). We have seen in the section 'A taking hold' in Chapter 3 that our objective certainty is never *inferred from* experience. There is no difficulty about seeing training as independent of inference or as a kind of drill, but what about repeated exposure? It, too, can be seen as a kind of drill: a drill that is not deliberate, a kind of natural conditioning effected by repeated occurrence. Repetition here is more subtle and varied than in training. Moreover, repetition is not the only conditioning agent in implicit assimilation; coherence greatly contributes, and its power lies not so much in audibility or visibility as in silence or seamlessness. Along with the *active* impact of repetition, the *inactive* impact of coherence plays a vital role in implicit assimilation:

> What stands fast does so, not because it is intrinsically obvious or convincing; it is rather held fast by what lies around it. (OC 144)

What lies around it are other beliefs that stand fast: 'It is not single axioms that strike me as obvious, it is a system in which consequences and premises give one another *mutual* support' (OC 141). It may at first glance seem difficult to avoid a propositional or indeed an inferential reading here, and yet the very systematicity of our certainty – the fact that it does not occur in the form of single axioms, but as a ready-made system, a network, a coherent and cohesive world-picture – precludes a propositional and an inferential rendering of what Wittgenstein here misleadingly calls 'consequences and premises', 'judgments', 'propositions':[14]

> When we first begin to *believe* anything, what we believe is not a single proposition, it is a whole system of propositions. (Light dawns gradually over the whole.) (OC 141)
>
> What I hold fast to is not *one* proposition but a nest of propositions. (OC 225).
>
> … we are taught *judgments* and their connexion with other judgments. *A totality* of judgments is made plausible to us. (OC 140)

What Wittgenstein is attempting to convey in these passages is that, in the case of our basic beliefs, so-called *judgments* (note the italics) are not what they usually are: to say that we are *taught* judgments is to say that we do not begin by assimilating single axioms on which to base subsequent judgments, but the judgments themselves. So that, in fact, we are not ourselves doing the judging; we are not doing any reasoning or inferring – consequences and

premises *give one another* mutual support. We do not first *learn* as children that 'all human beings have parents' and thereby *conclude* or *judge* that 'I must have parents too.' 'Judgment' here has none of its inductive or decisional flavour. Our assurance about 'all human beings having parents' is not the consequence of an *act of judgment* on our part; it is held fast by what lies around it. It is an *unreasoned* 'judgment' that gets its certainty from its cohering with a myriad other similarly unreasoned beliefs – everyone we know has parents, people who do not have parents have *lost* them, even our cat has just produced kittens, and so on. It is the very systematicity of the 'judgments' we assimilate, their belonging to a whole, their seamless coherence within a system that gives them their unquestionability. Our objective certainties 'hang together' (OC 279). To believe a single one is to believe a whole network of them, and hence toppling one would have an avalanche effect: the entire network would collapse, our whole world-picture would need revision:

> If I wanted to doubt the existence of the earth long before my birth, I should have to doubt all sorts of things that stand fast for me. (OC 234)
>
> I cannot depart from this *judgment* without toppling all other judgments with it. (OC 419)

To say that we *inherit* 'the background' (OC 94), the system of our unquestioned beliefs, is not to say that we are simply grafted with a total world-picture at birth, but that ready-made judgments or rules are handed down to us in the context of a life, of a world, of the use of our senses and emotions. We cannot therefore discard the role of observation and instruction in our acquisition of our world-picture: 'This system is something that a human being acquires by means of observation and instruction. I intentionally do not say "learns" ' (OC 279). We do not amass the hinges on which our whole thinking and acting in the world revolves scientifically or intellectually: 'I do not explicitly learn the propositions that stand fast for me' (OC 152). This explicit rejection of 'learning' is in fact a rejection of *propositional* learning. So that the observation and instruction by means of which we acquire some of our hinges are to be understood as operating in a noncognitive capacity: the *observation* in question is not a conscious, attentive, pondered observation, but a *swallowing* or *absorption* (OC 143); and *instruction* here is not a propositional teaching, but a *training*.[15]

Our objective certainty is an animal-like certainty; it is not due to our having ascertained the *truth* of a belief, its *correct* mirroring of the world, but to its seamless coherence; to its not standing out as unacceptable, as a foreign body. To its not standing out at all. Its invisibility, its inarticulateness are a measure of its unquestionability. It is accepted as self-propelled, *allant de soi, going without saying*.

An inarticulate consensus

This *going without saying* quality of hinges is rendered by Wittgenstein in his frequent use of the expression: 'nothing speaks against it' or 'everything speaks for it' (OC 4, 89, 93, 117), and such others as: 'wherever I look, I find no ground for doubting that …' (OC 123). These are suitably vague images signalling the coherentist type of observation and assimilation operative in the development and maintenance of our objective certainty. In using expressions to the effect that 'nothing speaks against' our belief or that 'wherever we look we find no disagreement' with it, Wittgenstein means to emphasize the coherent and cohesive role played by (unconcerted) agreement and by instinct in our possession or acquisition of objective certainty. As I was growing up, no one specifically informed me that I had a body and nothing spoke against me when I referred to it as being tired or in pain. A silent consensus *enabled* me to go on. And it was thus, in the silence and the absence of contradiction that everything spoke *for* it. No training, no assimilation could be effected if every rule were contradicted: if having assimilated that 'I am part of the human species', I then found that some people referred to me as 'a table', others as 'a cat'. Assimilation was effected in, indeed made possible by, the absence of conflict or inconsistency. I was implicitly encouraged by the fact that 'it all coheres'; that everything speaks *for* and nothing *against* my assurance that 'human beings have feelings, like and dislike each other, speak the truth and lie, sleep, play, die'. The consensus was not voiced. No insistent reiteration, no perpetually renewed instruction and, in some cases, no thought or mention at all was ever needed to ensure that 'some things stand unshakeably fast' for me (OC 144).

It must be stressed that *originating* in some form of experience or agreement does not make acquired hinges in any way the *reasoned* product of experience, or the result of a *concerted* consensus. Again, Wittgenstein can be misleading, such as in his use of the words: 'overwhelming evidence' in the following passage:

> The propositions of mathematics might be said to be fossilized. – The proposition 'I am called …' is not. But it too is regarded as *incontrovertible* by those who, like myself, have overwhelming evidence for it. And this is not out of thoughtlessness. For, the evidence's being overwhelming consists precisely in the fact that we do not *need* to give way before any contrary evidence. And so we have here a buttress similar to the one that makes the propositions of mathematics incontrovertible. (OC 657)

The words 'overwhelming evidence' should not be taken to mean: reasons, grounds or proofs that one has for being called so-and-so. One does not *know* what one is called *on the grounds of* … say, having checked one's birth

certificate, but in the overwhelming *experience* one has with one's name: having been called so-and-so for as long as one can remember; hearing one's parents recount how they came upon the name; and even seeing one's name on one's birth certificate. This is 'overwhelming evidence' in the sense that 'everything speaks for it and nothing against it'; again, 'overwhelming evidence' might really be read as overwhelming *exposure*.

Though some of our hinges are due to agreement or convention, this does not make their status any less logical. Agreement, convention or consensus need not be subjective or psychological. Our agreement about how we use words – about what we deem endowed with sense or devoid of sense, is not a conscious, subjective, *controlled* agreement, but an *unconcerted consensus*:

> But isn't human agreement essential to the game? …
>
> Our language game only works, of course, when a certain agreement prevails, but the concept of agreement does not enter into the language-game. (Z 428, 430)

The agreement that underlies our language-games is as blind as social mutations are blind. We have not any more *decided* that 'A rod has a length' or '2 + 2 = 4', than we have *decided*, at some point in our history, to live in groups, clans, tribes, families, rather than according to height or hair colour. Like our norms, our language is not rooted in intellectual or concerted agreement, but in a 'quiet agreement'.[16]

As to experience or reality, it also contributes to our grammar, only, again, not via ratiocination or justification. Wittgenstein is constantly puzzled by the *nature* of the impact of certain facts on concept-formation:

> Do I want to say, then, that certain facts are favourable to the formation of certain concepts; or again unfavourable? And does experience teach us this? It is a fact of experience that human beings alter their concepts, exchange them for others when they learn new facts; when in this way what was formerly important to them becomes unimportant, and *vice versa*. (Z 352)
>
> Is the indeterminacy of the logic of the concept of pain connected with the actual absence of certain physical possibilities of reading thoughts and feelings? – If that's a causal question – how can I answer it?
>
> Actually the question could be phrased in this way: How does what is *important* for us depend on what is physically possible? (LW II, p. 94)

Wittgenstein's grammatical view of necessity excludes a justificatory link between necessity (grammar) and reality, not a causal one. The relationship between 'certain facts' and our concepts is causal both in the sense of certain physical conditions constraining the kinds of concepts we have: 'if our memory functioned differently, we could not calculate as we do' (RFM 236),

and in the kind of constraint in question here – it is an *arational* constraint. Wittgenstein speaks of a language-game being *conditioned* [*bedingt*] by certain facts (OC 617), as opposed to *justified* by the facts:[17] 'Language did not emerge from some kind of ratiocination' (OC 475). This is the gist of Wittgenstein's conception of the *autonomy of grammar*.[18] Grammar is not *grounded in*, or *answerable to* reality. Grammar is, in this way, autonomous. Our grammar is human-bound, but its anthropological nature *does not* prevent grammar from being autonomous or objective: although it is an empirical fact that humans calculate the way they do, 'that does not make the propositions used in calculating into empirical propositions' (RFM, p. 381). Our bounds of sense are not empirical or subjective for being contingent. Barry Stroud is right:

> That we take just the step we do here [in following a rule] is a contingent fact, but it is not the result of a decision; it is not a convention to which there are alternatives among which we could choose. (1965, 491)

This is why Dummett's view of Wittgenstein's account of logical necessity as a 'full-blooded conventionalism' (1959, 170) is wrong. We do not *expressly* decide to treat a rule as unassailable. The agreement is not *optional* – for whoever is intent on making sense. The agreement that concerns us here is one that, as James Conant puts it, is not 'on the paradigm of a contract from which, at any moment, we could, in principle, indecorously withdraw' (Putnam 1990, lxix). An individual withdrawal or revision cannot affect the agreement; it will only affect the individual – that is, alienate her. Here is Conant on Stanley Cavell's understanding of 'agreement' (I quote Conant rather than Cavell, as I believe him to be more enlightening on this):

> Such agreement does not rest on *mere* agreements or mere conventions. … The agreement of which Wittgenstein speaks, Cavell suggests, is not only not one that can be abrogated at will, it is one concerning which we can form no coherent conception of what it would mean to abrogate it. To withdraw from the relevant form of 'agreement', here would entail shedding one's capacity to harmonize with others, becoming completely dissonant with one's fellow beings. The attempt to imagine one's distancing oneself from one's form of life is, on this view, not a task that one is obviously equal to. It is tantamount to envisioning one's withdrawal from the human race and entering into a condition in which one is stripped of the natural reactions and propensities that we share with others and which permit us to lead a shared life. (Putnam 1990, lxix)

At the ground level of our human practices, agreement is neither willed nor controllable, but objective and *necessary*. There is no making sense in our world, no consonance with our fellow humans, without being poised on the

same logical bedrock. Logical necessity is not less compelling or objective for being specifically human. It is *objective, humanly speaking*.[19]

As we move away from instinct towards knowledge (science) and concerted agreement, we move towards articulation or sayability. Conversely, moving from knowledge and concerted agreement towards what might be called 'conditioned reflex' or automatism, we move towards ineffability, towards enacted belief. Their being *conditioned* does not make some of our hinges any more *grounded* than the unconditioned ones, any less like reflexes. Through conditioning, they too become unalloyed act and exhibit the automatism of genuinely instinctive behaviour. All hinges have the same grammatical status regardless of their provenance. It is time we took a detailed look at our four classes of hinges. In the next chapter, *linguistic* and *personal* hinges are examined.

6
Linguistic and Personal Hinges

In this chapter, linguistic and personal hinges are examined. As noted in the previous chapter, linguistic hinges are straightforward grammatical rules that precisely define our use of individual words and numbers. However precise, these rules need not be formulated in order to be assimilated and conformed to. Personal hinges have to do with the certainties that underpin what we say or think about ourselves as individuals.

Linguistic hinges: the drill of rules

> A child uses … primitive forms of language when it learns to talk. Here the teaching of language is not explanation, but training. (PI 5)

One of the main forms of acquisition of our giveupable hinges is training or deliberate repetition. This is how we acquire many of our *linguistic* hinges. We do not learn that '2 + 2 = 4' or that 'This is (what we call) a chair' from reasoning, but by it being drilled into us. Linguistic rules, rules that instruct us on the use of words, are not submitted to the child for its consideration or judgment, but transmitted to her as something she *must* use if she is to make sense. They are pronounced in a tone of uncompromising, unassailable, unhesitating assurance: 'This is a chair.' Linguistic training, like all training, does not begin with a doubt, but with an affirmation:

> We teach a child 'that is your hand', not 'that is perhaps (or "probably") your hand'. That is how a child learns the innumerable language-games that are concerned with his hand. An investigation or question, 'whether this is really a hand' never occurs to him. Nor, on the other hand, does he learn that he *knows* that this is a hand. (OC 374)

Initially, the child will encounter explicit encouragement by others in her correct use of the word, but the training also takes more subtle forms, as

repeated exposure complements explicit repetition. The child's repeated witnessing of others' unhesitating reference to 'chairs' or 'hands' in everyday activity acts like a reiterated implicit agreement with her use of words. The coherence of both natural and deliberate repetition instils certainty. Without such certainty, no going on is possible. Perpetual doubt from its parents, its peers, itself, would prevent the child's reception and cementing of its beliefs – its acquisition of words to form sentences, of sentences to form language-games and of language-games to participate in the human form of life.

What interests us here is not only the trained assimilation of linguistic hinges, but also the indubitable certainty which this training produces. And here we find that the same absence of doubt that characterizes the assimilation characterizes the application:

> We say: if a child has mastered language – and hence its application – it must know the meaning of words. It must, for example, be able to attach the name of its colour to a white, black, red or blue object *without the occurrence of any doubt*. (OC 522; my emphasis)
>
> And indeed no one misses doubt here; no one is surprised that we do not merely *surmise* the meaning of our words. (OC 523)

We sometimes do reflect before making the next move in a game, but reflection is not a logically necessary preface to our moves. As Ryle puts it:

> The chess player may require some time in which to plan his moves before he makes them. Yet the general assertion that all intelligent performance requires to be prefaced by the consideration of appropriate propositions rings unplausibly, even when it is apologetically conceded that the required consideration is often very swift and may go quite unmarked by the agent. (1949, 30)

And Wittgenstein:

> Our use of language is like playing a game according to the rules. Sometimes it is used automatically, sometimes one looks up the rules. Now we get into difficulties when we believe ourselves to be following a rule. We must examine to see whether we are. (AWL 32)

If I am a fluent speaker of English, I may hesitate, reflect, attempt recall before using the words 'funambulist' or 'phylloxera', but not before using the word 'table'. I use the word 'table' without a thought. When as a child I first learned the use of the word 'table', I *did* give it a thought, or some attention, and I might have misapplied it, but after years of repeated use and

exposure, only a slip of the tongue or a mental disorder can cause me to call a table 'a chair'. I *cannot* be *mistaken* or *uncertain* about the use of some words:

> 'Can you be mistaken about this colour's being called "green" in English?' My answer to this can only be 'No'. If I were to say 'Yes, for there is always the possibility of a delusion', that would mean nothing at all … (OC 624)
>
> But does that mean that it is unthinkable that the word 'green' should have been produced here by a slip of the tongue or a momentary confusion? Don't we know of such cases? – One can also say to someone 'Mightn't you perhaps have made a slip?' that amounts to: 'Think about it again'. –
>
> But these rules of caution only make sense if they come to an end somewhere.
>
> A doubt without an end is not even a doubt. (OC 625)

The impossibility of mistake (if I am a fluent speaker of English, and not afflicted with a cognitive disorder) cannot be due to my correctly *remembering* the proper application before each use – 'When I talk about this table, – am I *remembering* that this object is called a "table" '? (PI 601) – for then I could also *misremember* it. Repetition has, as it were, *drilled it into me*; I no longer need, as I did when I first learned the word, to recall it each time, I utter it automatically, without a thought, the same way I get on a bicycle and start pedalling without having first to recall the technique I learned as a beginner.[1] Similarly, '2 + 2 = 4' is a mathematical hinge for me (as for most numerate individuals), but not '235 + 532 = 767'. I have had to calculate, however swiftly, to arrive at the sum here, and a hinge cannot be the result of a process of calculation. But as Wittgenstein notes, some calculations become 'fixed' or 'reliable once for all' – that is, removed from doubt and where checking no longer makes sense – whilst others do not (OC 48). '2 + 2 = 4' is such a *fixed calculation*: although as a child I had to learn it, it was soon drilled into me (its simplicity helped), but '235 + 532 = 767' has never become fixed: it lacks the simplicity and has never undergone the repetition that '2 + 2 = 4' has. Which is not to say that I cannot train myself, as some mathematical whizzes do, to instant access of '235 + 532 = 767', but unless these then *fixed* calculations become as impervious to mistake as '2 + 2 = 4', they are not hinges.

Some of our linguistic rules must *stand fast* for us if we are to participate in language-games: 'It is simply the normal case, to be incapable of mistake about the designation of *certain things* in one's mother tongue' (OC 630; my emphasis). *Certain things*, not all. Wittgenstein questions the preconception that a mnemonic process prefaces our use of *all* words.[2] It is important to note that only the more basic (that is, the simplest or most frequently used) designations are employed with the automaticity which characterizes

hinges. Wittgenstein's examples include words like 'table' or 'chair', 'red' or 'blue', not 'phylloxera' or 'funambulist':

> The whole game we play depends just as much on not doubting every physical fact as on not doubting whether we use 'red' or 'blue' correctly. (CE 420)
>
> We know, with the same certainty with which we believe any mathematical proposition, how the letters A and B are pronounced, what the colour of human blood is called, that other human beings have blood and call it 'blood'. (OC 340)

Our certainty in using such words is not due to the implicit, instantaneous recall of rules prior to each use; it is a thoughtless *know-how*:

> 'Understanding a word' may mean: *knowing* how it is used; *being able* to apply it. (PG, p. 47)
>
> 'I can use the word "yellow"' is like "I *know how* to move the king in chess". (PG, p. 49; my emphasis)

The understanding of language, as of a game, insists Wittgenstein throughout *Philosophical Grammar*, is not the knowledge of rules, but more like the *mastery* of a calculus, an *ability*. In the case of linguistic hinges, this know-how, this mastery is *flawless*: in the sense that here, we are simply *incapable* of mistake – though we can certainly make a slip of the tongue, or mispronounce.

Personal hinges

Personal hinges are hinges related to an individual; they relate not only to an individual's spatiotemporal position (e.g. '*I am here now*', '*I am sitting in my room*'), but also to her states (e.g. '*I am afraid*', '*I am awake*'), her biography (e.g. '*My name is N*', '*I live in London*', '*I speak French*', '*I play squash*'), her perceptions (e.g. '*I hear the radio announcer forecasting rain*', '*I see the keyboard I am typing on*', '*I see my old friend, Alfred who is standing in front of me*').[3] We shall see that, like all other hinges, *personal* hinges act as logical or grammatical rules; they are not empirical or epistemic propositions, but constitute the underived, inarticulate starting points of what it makes sense for an individual to say of herself. Within the set of *personal* hinges, I distinguish between *autobiographical* and *perceptual* hinges, the latter including both external perception and autoperception.

An objection that may be raised against the plausibility of the existence of *perceptual* hinges is that of the fallibility of perception: it may be objected that I can be in error about who or what I am perceiving, where I am and so on. But this objection overlooks the fact that I can only be in error where there is room for error, and I will argue that (what I will define as) *indubitable*

perception precludes error. Objective certainty is immune to the fallibility of perception or indeed to the possibility of any kind of illusion. Before addressing each subset of *personal* hinges, I would like to remark on two well-known philosophical passages, in which *perceptual* hinges appear (emphasized in the text) in all their variations. In the *First Meditation*, Descartes writes:

> Yet although the senses occasionally deceive us with respect to objects which are very small or in the distance, there are many other beliefs about which doubt is quite impossible, even though they are derived from the senses – for example, that *I am here, sitting by the fire, wearing a winter dressing-gown, holding this piece of paper in my hands, and so on*. Again, how could it be denied that these hands or this whole body are mine? Unless perhaps I were to liken myself to madmen, whose brains are so damaged by the persistent vapours of melancolia that they firmly maintain they are kings when they are paupers, or say they are dressed in purple when they are naked, or that their heads are made of earthenware, or that they are pumpkins, or made of glass. But such people are insane, and I would be thought equally mad if I took anything from them as a model for myself. (1641, 12–13; my emphasis)

In 'Certainty', G.E. Moore writes:

> *I am at present, as you can all see, in a room and not in the open air; I am standing up, and not either sitting or lying down; I have clothes on, and am not absolutely naked; I am speaking in a fairly loud voice, and am not either singing or whispering or keeping quite silent; I have in my hand some sheets of paper with writing on them; there are a good many other people in the same room in which I am; and there are windows in that wall and a door in this one*.
>
> Now I have here made a number of different assertions; and I have made these assertions quite positively, as if there were no doubt whatever that they were true … And I do not think I can be justly accused of dogmatism or over-confidence for having asserted these things positively in the way that I did. … On the contrary, I should have been guilty of absurdity if, under the circumstances, I had not spoken positively about these things, if I spoke of them at all. …
>
> A … characteristic common to all those seven propositions was one which I am going to express by saying that I had for each of them when I made it, the evidence of my senses. … In other words, in all seven cases, what I said was partly based on 'the then present evidence of my senses'. (1941, 227, 243; my emphasis)

Moore's embarrassing error will be remembered where, on one occasion of his giving the above lecture, the following happened:

> Giving a local angle to his defence of common sense, Moore declared that among the things he *knew* there and then was that light from the sun was

> streaming through the roof. Most in the audience were aware, however, that the glass panels were diffusers for electrical illumination; the roof of the building was solid and opaque. Someone had the temerity to point this out to Moore in the question period. He responded 'Oh dear me!' and went on to the next question.[4]

Indeed, it is for such boundary cases – such *trompe-l'oeil* – that the circumstances of hinge perception need to be spelled out. I attempt this in the following section. What I wish to stress now is the uncanny closeness of Descartes' and Moore's texts. Close in all but one point, to which I shall come back: the appeal to an audience. Both philosophers depict circumstances which make their 'beliefs' or 'propositions' unquestionably certain, and both take this certainty to stem from the senses (Descartes' 'beliefs … derived from the senses'; Moore's propositions 'at least partly *based* on "the then present evidence of my senses" '). But if certainty is thus taken to be an empirical conclusion, it is logically exposed to falsification, and yet both philosophers vehemently reject the possibility of a sensical negation of their certainty. *Madness* or *absurdity* are in each case explicitly acknowledged as the price to be paid for doubt. Both passages make clear that doubt or denial are, in the circumstances depicted, not *sensical* options – and this, in spite of the alleged empirical nature of the beliefs: 'beliefs about which doubt is quite impossible, even though they are derived from the senses'.[5] In *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein agrees with Moore that these (and such) assertions are indubitable, but, unlike Moore, he comes to see that they are *not* empirically grounded:

> If a blind man were to ask me 'Have you got two hands?' I should not make sure by looking. (OC 125)

That is, according to Wittgenstein, Moore is not making any of the above assertions *on the evidence of his senses*. He did not, prior to his assertions, make sure that he was present in the room and not in the open air, that he had clothes on, that he was speaking and not singing. Moore may have looked *as if* he were making sure that he really was there; that is, he may have ostentatiously 'looked' at himself, pointed at himself, at his shirt, and so on. And in fact, he did 'show' his hand when he read the 'Proof of an External World' paper. But these are all mimicry of verification and justification; he did not *look for his hand* before showing it; there was no uncertainty there that would have required checking. Similarly, the audience's certainty that Moore is there is not due to the *evidence* of their senses; it is *caused* by their perception of Moore, but not *based* on their perception of Moore. Analogously, Descartes' 'I am here, sitting by the fire …' pronounced in the circumstances he pronounces them in makes all these (what he calls) beliefs, articulated examples of *perceptual hinges*. The reason he feels at

liberty to doubt what is, on pain of being likened to madmen, indubitable, is that he erroneously supposes these certainties to be empirical conclusions ('derived from the senses'), and therefore by their very nature dubitable. This is where Wittgenstein, rather than surrender to doubt, comes to suspect a confusion in our grammar:

> There seem to be propositions that have the character of experiential propositions, but whose truth is for me unassailable. That is to say, if I assume that they are false, I must mistrust all my judgements. (RC III, 348)

A remarkable insight is operative here, which Wittgenstein has articulated before, but only with respect to some first-person psychological statements: the idea that not all *experiential* statements are *empirical* statements. That is, our certainty about some of the things we *experience* is not *derived* from our senses; indeed, it is not derived at all. Wittgenstein had come to this realization before,[6] but it now strikes him as a revelation because the 'experiential propositions' in question here are what have always counted as empirical propositions *par excellence*: 'Here is a hand', 'I am here, sitting by the fire … ' Some hinges, when articulated, resemble empirical propositions in that they have to do with perception: 'This pillar-box is red', 'This is a hand', 'I am sitting by the fire'. And yet, although sensorial experience (be it merely proprioception) is involved in the determination of such hinges, this does not make them empirical propositions – that is, they are not *inferred from*, or *made on the basis of*, perception. Descartes and Moore did not *come to the conclusion* that they were where they were, that they were holding (a) sheet(s) of paper in their hand. Here, nothing *made* them certain: they *were* certain. The perceptual situation in these cases is such that there is no room for doubt or hesitation, and therefore no use for reflection, inference, derivation or verification. Their pronouncements were not *derived* from their senses; they were artificial articulations (in this case for the sake of philosophical argument) of certainties that in normal or default circumstances are ineffable and ungrounded. Articulating them does not make them into (empirical) propositions, however much they may *look like* (empirical) propositions. Certainty here is not a *coming to see*, but a *thoughtless grasp*, a *direct taking-hold*.

Our objective certainty may have its origin or *cause* in experience, it does not have its justification or *ground* in experience (OC 131, 429). Their being *perceptual* and their being *caused* by experience does not preclude some certainties from being *logical* certainties. Both Moore and Descartes were right about their certainties being indubitable, and wrong about these certainties being empirical. The source of error, which has given free rein to philosophical scepticism, is here: in the mistaking of a logical bound of sense for an empirical proposition. But we shall come back to this category mistake

of scepticism; for now, let us look at autobiographical and autoperceptual hinges more closely.

Autobiographical hinges

Autobiographical hinges make up an individual's objective certainty about[7] who he is, where he is,[8] what he is doing, the people he knows, his abilities, some of the events in his past, and so on. Certainty about where he lives and whether or not he has been on a certain continent are examples:

> For months I have lived at address A, I have read the name of the street and the number of the house countless times, have received countless letters here and given countless people the address. If I am wrong about it, the mistake is hardly less than if I were (wrongly) to believe I was writing Chinese and not German. (OC 70)
>
> If I say 'I have never been in Asia Minor', where do I get this knowledge from? I have not worked it out, no one told me; my memory tells me. – So I can't be wrong about it? Is there a truth here which I *know*? – I cannot depart from this judgment without toppling all other judgments with it. (OC 419)

Autobiographical certainties resemble *truths* which I *know* about myself, but although, from a third-person perspective, these *are* truths which can be *known*, that is not how *I* relate to them. I do not have an epistemic rapport with my autobiographical certainties; they are not *derived* from reflection and if it is *my memory* that *tells me*, it is memory that *cannot* deceive me[9] for I cannot be *mistaken* about my autobiographical hinges.[10] Given that I am not prone to bouts of amnesia or madness,[11] I can be *objectively* certain that I have lived at address A for the past four years; that I have never been to Asia Minor or to the moon or in the stratosphere. Error, doubt or uncertainty about such autobiographical certainties would have to be classed as *aberrations* and not mistakes; a 'mistake' here is logically impossible:

> I cannot possibly doubt that I was never in the stratosphere. (OC 222)
>
> If I were to say 'I have never been on the moon – but I may be mistaken', that would be idiotic. (OC 662)

But what is it that makes some of my autobiographical memories *hinges* and others not?

> Imagine that someone were to say, without wanting to *philosophize*, 'I don't know if I have ever been on the moon; I don't *remember* ever having been there'. (Why would this person be so radically different from us?)
>
> In the first place – how would he know that he was on the moon? How does he imagine it? Compare: 'I do not know if I was ever in the village

> of X.' But neither could I say that if X were in Turkey, for I know that I was never in Turkey. (OC 332)

Why is it that my never having been on the moon or in the Antarctic, and my having been to Rabat, Montreal or Vienna are hinges for me, but not my having been to Innsbruck? I seem to remember having been in Innsbruck, but I have a vague feeling that I may be confusing it with Salzburg. On the other hand, I am as certain of having been in Vienna as of having been in Rabat where I was born and lived the first nine years of my life, and which I visited twice thereafter. What makes my certainty here so adamant, and so impervious to error? The fact that it is not *erected* on evidence and can therefore not be knocked down. Repetition and/or salience come into play here, not evidence.

Absence of hesitation or doubt, automaticity in our assimilation may be achieved through repetition or drill, but it is also facilitated by a higher degree of salience (proximity, familiarity, simplicity etc.). Vienna is a world capital which has been culturally, politically and historically salient. It has also been salient in my life: I have been there several times, a couple of times on my way to Kirchberg am Wechsel, Viennese friends have taken me on tours of the city, welcomed me to their homes, I have sent them thank-you notes addressed to Vienna, I have read about the Vienna Circle, and so on. I have thus assimilated 'Vienna' into my belief system in all sorts of ways and none of these has been inferential (I have not *deduced* from the fact that I bought an air ticket to 'Vienna' that *therefore* the city I landed in was Vienna). My certainty about having been to Vienna has been, so to speak, *drilled into me* by repeated exposure. Innsbruck, on the other hand, was not the subject of such drill: if I have been there, it must have been a single and unimpressive experience. And as salient experiences go, being on the moon is probably high on the list, so that no normal human being *can* be uncertain about ever having been on the moon. Here, any hesitation or forgetfulness would translate, not uncertainty, but some form of mental disorder. Temporal and spatial proximity (I will say more about the latter in the next section) also contribute to objective certainty: I may not be certain about which day last week I went to the dentist and may have to tax my memory to find out, but – all being otherwise well with me – I would have not a moment's hesitation about having been to the dentist an hour ago. I would no more hesitate or reflect here than I would to assert that I am not at the dentist now or that I have never been to the moon. In fact, I am *objectively certain* that I have been in my flat all morning that I have not taken a walk on the Heath, not gone to the British Library or to the dentist or to the moon.

The same dividing line that we saw occur with respect to linguistic hinges and linguistic *knowledge* occurs between autobiographical *hinges* and autobiographical *propositions*. The line is drawn according to where there is and where there is no room for error. Absence of doubt can be natural or it can be, as in

the assimilation of linguistic hinges and some autobiographical hinges, the result of drill or repeated exposure. So that, familiarity, drill, salience all contribute to something's being a hinge, which is not to say that they *justify* it.

Perceptual hinges

It is certainly not my intention to enter into the vibrant and complex field of the philosophy of perception. I will simply make the following assumptions about perception: it need not be attentive and it need not be conceptual. Perceptual hinges can be distributed in terms of *autoperception* and *external perception*. External perception includes the traditional visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory and gustatory senses; whilst autoperception is comprised of the more recently defined proprioceptive, kinesthetic, cenesthetic senses, as well as of the perception of pleasure and pain. Proprioception is generally defined as the sense of *position* of our body and its parts, as well as their interaction; kinesthetics refers to the sense of *motion* of our body and its parts; and while the perception of pain and pleasure concerns localized sensations, cenesthetic sensations are nonlocalized, generalized sensations (of wellbeing, illness, anguish, *ennui*, happiness, despair and such).[12] As far as the relation between hinges and perception is concerned, their only possible link is a noninferential, nonreflective one, so that inasmuch as identification of the more sophisticated cenesthetic sensations or moods (e.g. *ennui*) requires reflection, they are susceptible of error, and any certainty associated to them cannot therefore be a hinge certainty.

Perceptual hinges, when articulated, resemble empirical statements in that they have to do with perception: 'This pillar-box is red', 'There are people in this room', 'I see a pen on the desk'. Yet, we have seen that although sensorial experience is involved in the determination of perceptual hinges, perceptual hinges are not empirical propositions; they are not *conclusions* or *descriptions* of what we see, but *norms of description*. That is, certainty here has the rigidity of a measuring rod:

> Someone asks me: What is the colour of this flower? I answer: 'red'. – Are you absolutely sure? Yes, absolutely sure! But may I not have been deceived and called the wrong colour 'red'? No. The certainty with which I call the colour 'red' is the rigidity of my measuring-rod, it is the rigidity from which I start. When I give descriptions, *that* is not to be brought into doubt. This simply characterises what we call describing.
>
> (I may of course even here assume a slip of the tongue, but nothing else.) (RFM 329)

Some of our perceptions then are not conclusions we come to from the use of our senses, but unreasoned premises that are only *causally* incumbent on the use of our senses. Yet, for such seemingly empirical statements to function as rules rather than constitute conclusions or hypotheses, conditions

of *indubitable perception* must prevail. Conditions that *logically* preclude hesitation or verification, and allow us to take hold of the object of perception as we take hold of a towel, 'directly … without having doubts'. Such conditions have gained wide acceptance as far as autoperception is concerned: the traditional mediacy of reflection or introspection is giving way, at least in *basic* autoperception, to an uninferred awareness.[13] It is in external perception that the possibility of indubitable perception proves more difficult to establish. In the next section, I briefly attempt to sketch conditions that make some perceptual experiences invulnerable to illusion, doubt or mistake.

Perceptual hinges are dependent on an individual's perception, *not* on her attention.[14] Objective certainty does not *require* contemplation or focused attention on an object. Perception here is *passive*, inattentive; focus on an object will not determine or indeed enhance certainty. Indeed, as we shall see in the next section, the *conscious* perception of one's body as a requirement for the certainty of having a body is symptomatic of *pathological* cases, cases where the individual has lost her natural proprioception.

Autoperceptual hinges

'I am here' is a kinesthetic hinge. It is the dispositional default certainty I have of being where I am. An ineffable certainty which manifests itself in the host of propositions, questions, hypotheses and commands I utter every day. The sentence: 'I'll stay here, you go' presupposes the kinesthetic hinge 'I am here'. It also presupposes that my friend, who is standing next to me, is also objectively certain that '*I* (meaning me) am here'. Though proprioception and kinesthetics are often technically differentiated,[15] kinesthesis is sometimes simply regarded as part of proprioception (and I will treat it as such). Oliver Sacks includes kinesthesis in his description of proprioception, which he refers to as our 'sixth sense', our 'position sense' (1985, 52, 45): the 'continuous but unconscious sensory flow from the movable parts of our body (muscles, tendons, joints), by which their position and tone and motion is continually monitored and adjusted, but in a way which is hidden from us because it is automatic and unconscious' (42). It is precisely this automatism and nonconsciousness characteristic of the *normal* operation of proprioception that make it an ideal candidate for objective certainty. As Sacks points out, there is nothing more important for us, at an elemental level, than the control, the owning and operation, of our own physical selves: '[a]nd yet it is so automatic, so familiar, we never give it a thought' (42). For Sacks too, then, such allegedly empirical propositions as 'I am here', 'I have a body', 'I have hands', 'I exist' are not empirical propositions at all, but basic, nonreflective, underived certainties whose putting in question is, in normal circumstances, artificial and meaningless. Sacks makes himself the connection with *On Certainty*:

> Jonathan Miller produced a beautiful television series, *The Body in Question*, but the body, normally, is never in question: our bodies are

> beyond question, or perhaps beneath question – they are simply, unquestionably, there. This unquestionability of the body, its certainty, is for Wittgenstein, the start and basis of all knowledge and certainty. Thus, in his last book (*On Certainty*), he opens by saying: 'If you do know that *here is one hand*, we'll grant you all the rest.' But then, in the same breath, on the same opening page: 'What we can ask is whether it can make sense to doubt it…': and, a little later, 'Can I doubt it? Grounds for *doubt* are lacking!' (42–3)

No sceptic can effectively put the body in question. What *can*, however, is loss of proprioception: 'that vital sixth sense without which a body must remain unreal, unpossessed' (52). A rare and devastating occurrence, this 'specific, organically based, feeling of disembodiedness' (51) is described by Sacks in 'The Disembodied Woman':

> She continues to feel, with the continuing loss of proprioception, that her body is dead, not-real, not-hers – she cannot appropriate it to herself. She can find no words for this state, and can only use analogies derived from other senses: 'I feel my body is blind and deaf to itself… it has no sense of itself'…
>
> …in some sense, she *is* 'pithed', disembodied, a sort of wraith. She has lost, with her sense of proprioception, the fundamental, organic mooring of identity – at least of that corporeal identity…
>
> …her situation is, and remains, a 'Wittgensteinian' one. She does not know 'Here is one hand' – her loss of proprioception… has deprived her of her existential, her epistemic, basis – and nothing she can do, or think, will alter this fact. She cannot be certain of her body.[16] (49–52)

Only in such extreme, unfortunate and isolated cases can the objective certainty of having a body dissolve, making the mooring of identity – which is normally natural and inattentive – an applied, focused, indeed laborious operation whereby the individual's conscious perception is forced to replace the body's natural and unconscious autoperception and direction:

> …*it's like the body's blind*. My body can't see itself if it's lost its eyes, right? So *I* have to watch it – be its eyes. (46)

The natural, unselfconscious certainty of having a body, of being embodied, is lost and can only be replaced by a contrived, self-conscious attention. The unfortunate individual must *look* at her hand or her body and must perceptually acknowledge their presence in order to be able to move them. Such *extra*ordinary cases serve to highlight the ordinary cases. In normal human beings, proprioception is unconscious, automatic and successful – there is no *coming to* be certain about having a body. Certainty is there, thoughtless

and automatic. So that proprioceptive hinges – 'I have a body', 'I am moving my feet', 'I am here now' – do not belong to the speaker's propositional beliefs but are akin to reflexes.

The case of proprioception helps to highlight the pathological aspect of much behaviour that requires thought, anticipation, preparation and effort where it is ordinarily automatic and thoughtless.[17] The psychological equivalent of proprioception can be seen in autistic individuals' inability to intuitively attribute mental states to self and others – what psychologists call their impaired 'Theory of Mind' (ToM) (Frith and Happé 1999, 1). Unlike ordinary individuals, autistic individuals must *work at* such things as self-consciousness, introspection and belief attribution. This effort is most apparent in individuals with high-functioning autism or Asperger syndrome who often possess a late acquired, explicit Theory of Mind, which appears to be the result of effortful learning (ibid.1): 'These individuals appear to arrive at an explicit theory of other minds by a slow and painstaking learning process, just as they appear to arrive at self-consciousness through a long and tortuous route' (ibid. 2). Still, in spite of all effort, 'the understanding of mental states developed by these individuals is rather different from the effortless, automatic ToM [Theory of Mind] of the normal pre-schooler' (ibid. 7). For instance, they might mistake a joke for a lie, and often find it hard to distinguish sarcasm from outright deception; also, their approach to social tasks resembles slow, conscious calculation (ibid. 7).[18] Accounts from patients of Asperger syndrome invariably relate the difficulty of what normally *comes naturally*:

> Autism makes me hear other people's words but be unable to know what the words mean. Or autism lets me speak my own words without knowing what I am saying or even thinking. (ibid. 15)
>
> … you have to work so hard in order to understand speech … trying to speak is quite an effort. (ibid. 15)
>
> The vague sense of my body I did have meant that I wasn't particularly aware whether I was dirty, of how my clothes were sitting. I didn't feel it. (ibid. 17)

External perceptual hinges: indubitable perception

> … if I watch for some time an animal a few feet in front of me, in a good light, if I prod it perhaps, sniff, and take note of the noises it makes, I may say, 'That's a pig'; and this … will be 'incorrigible', nothing could be produced that would show that I had made a mistake.
>
> J.L. Austin (1962, 114).

> Descartes was wrong to believe we can doubt things that are there before us.
>
> Ortega Y. Gasset (1984, 55)

The one distinguishing feature between Descartes' and Moore's texts quoted above is the latter's explicit (and physical, at the time of his talk) appeal to an audience:

> I am at present, *as you can all see*, in a room and not in the open air; I am standing up, and not either sitting or lying down; I have clothes on, and am not absolutely naked; I am speaking in a fairly loud voice, and am not either singing or whispering or keeping quite silent; I have in my hand some sheets of paper with writing on them; there are a good many other people in the same room in which I am; and there are windows in that wall and a door in this one. (op. cit.; my emphasis)

The physical presence of the audience is of no great importance and will in fact be subsequently replaced by the virtual presence of his readers. It is the appeal that is significant. For by it, Moore kills two birds for Descartes' one. Moore not only illustrates his own certainty, but the audience's as well. The audience is well enough placed, and his readers well enough apprised of the circumstances, to be just as certain of Moore's assertions as he is. Just as *objectively* certain, that is, for in both Moore's certainty and the audience's, there is no inference and therefore no room for error. The audience did not need Moore's directing attention to himself to be certain that he was standing there, talking, dressed, and so on. The certainty was inherent in their listening to him, in their not gasping at any nudity, and so on. The certainty there, though perceptual, is not inferred.

Where proprioceptive hinges can be *grosso modo* expressed by pure indexicals, external ones can be expressed by impure indexicals: 'There is a chair there', 'That is a book', 'This is my friend, Alfred.' Though, of course, not all demonstratives are hinges: 'This is my friend, Alfred' said as I believe it is his silhouette I am perceiving in the mist is not a perceptual *hinge*. Moore, however, is standing where all can clearly see that he is there. What marks the difference between hinge perception and fallible perception are the conditions of perception. For a perception to be a hinge, it must be indubitable; the circumstances of perception must be such that the perceiver *cannot* be mistaken. That is, the object of perception must be not only *maximally*, but *indubitably* salient.[19] Wittgenstein's examples of such error-proof perceptual situations typically include qualifiers which aim to preclude the possibility of mistake. Qualifiers such as 'here', 'in the room', 'in front of', 'before my eyes', 'opposite me': 'the person opposite me … my old friend … whom I have known for years' (OC 10, 472, 532, 337, 613) rather than 'the person in the mist' or 'across the street' or 'the person I met once'. There is in such circumstances the same impossibility of my hesitating or being mistaken about 'This is Alfred, my friend of many years sitting next to me' or 'Here is a red patch' as of 'I am in pain'. There is no gap in all these cases that can be infiltrated by hesitation, doubt, verification or inference. Of course

Moore's infamous skylight gaffe is a reminder that we need to be wary of *apparently* indubitable conditions, but the mistaking of a skylight for the sky is possible in certain circumstances; not in others.[20] As always, depending on circumstances, the same string of words can translate an objective certainty or a falsifiable piece of knowledge. 'This is red' is a hinge in obvious and normal cases, not in less decisive hues or in special circumstances:

> One may be wrong about 'there being a hand here'. Only in particular circumstances is it impossible. – 'Even in a calculation one can be wrong – only in certain circumstances one can't.' (OC 25)

Austin makes an analogous point:

> Of course, there are any number of 'sense-statements' about which I can be, and am, completely sure. In ordinary cases ordinary men are nearly always certain when a thing looks red…, or when they're in pain… (1979, 94)

But how can we philosophically discriminate these ordinary or obvious cases, wherein one is objectively certain, from the *apparently* obvious ones? How can we distinguish perception that is *indubitable* from perception that is merely maximally certain?

In his paper on 'Discrimination and Perceptual Knowledge', Alvin I. Goldman seeks 'to explicate the concept of knowledge by reference to the causal processes that produce (or sustain) belief' (1976, 771). He defines knowledge as the ability to differentiate or discriminate, and endeavours to outline perceptual knowledge by delineating a set of conditions that are meant to rule out the presence of *perceptual alternatives* and therefore of perceptual error.[21] These are a conjunction of relations or properties involving distance, orientation and environmental conditions, which he dubs a distance-orientation-environment (*DOE*) *relation*:

> One relation that can affect the resultant percept is *distance*. Another relational factor is *relative orientation*, both of object vis-à-vis perceiver and perceiver vis-à-vis object. The nature of the percept depends, for example, on which side of the object faces the perceiver, and on how the perceiver's bodily organs are oriented, or situated, vis-à-vis the object. Thirdly, the percept is affected by the current state of the *environment*, e.g. the illumination, the presence or absence of intervening objects, and the direction and velocity of the wind. (1976, 781)

An example of a DOE relation is: '*x* is 20 feet from *y*, the front side of *y* is facing *x*, the eyes of *x* are open and focused in *y*'s direction, no opaque object is interposed between *x* and *y*, and *y* is in moonlight' (ibid.). Goldman's

restriction of his analysis to *noninferential* perceptual knowledge (785), his protest against the 'tendency to overintellectualize or overrationalize the notion of knowledge', and his ensuing attempt 'to fashion an account of knowing that focuses on more primitive and pervasive aspects of cognitive life' (791) point towards the concept of objective certainty and away from knowledge. Indeed, like Wittgenstein, he finds the root of knowledge in animal or instinctive behaviour:

> A fundamental facet of animate life, both human and infra-human, is telling things apart, distinguishing predator from prey, for example, or a protective habitat from a threatening one. The concept of knowledge has its roots in this kind of cognitive activity. (1976, 791)

I suggest that these roots, as described in Goldman's paper, do not allude to a *cognitive* activity, but to a *subcognitive* one. If Goldman's DOE relation does go some way towards depicting the conditions of what I am attempting to characterize as hinge perception, a more exhaustive attempt at depicting error-proof conditions of perception should include what Goldman, 'for simplicity', has left out: consideration of the state, or what he calls the 'health' of the perceiver's sensory organs. I believe that, to be complete, the conditions of both the perceiver and the perceived need be considered. We must make sure that the individual is, as Charles Travis succinctly puts it: 'in good health and good lighting' (1989, 138). Here is my attempt, which is largely indebted to Crispin Wright:[22]

the object
(1) is in clear view (not far away; in good light; sufficiently stationary), and
the subject
(2) is possessed of operative typical visual equipment, and
(3) is free of afterimages and spots before the eyes, and
(4) is lucid, and
(5) is familiar with the object at hand, and variations thereof, and
(6) is free of hesitation or doubt about the satisfaction of any of these conditions.

This list falls short of my purpose in that it addresses only *visual* hinge perception, but alterations can be made to cater to the auditory and the tactile senses. Also, some of the terms on the list – particularly, the term 'familiar' – require much more precise definition, I shall not undertake this task here. As the list stands, (1) offers a rough delineation of the object's *indubitable salience*, while (2)–(6) depict conditions pertaining to the subject's perceptual adequacy. The satisfaction of all these conditions would result in *indubitable perception*. For, we can ask as Wright did, having listed his conditions: 'do we have any concept of how an illusion might occur under

these circumstances?' Similarly, Wittgenstein:

> Suppose now I say 'I'm incapable of being wrong about this: that is a book' while I point to an object. What would a mistake here be like? And have I any *clear* idea of it? (OC 17)

The question might also be put thus: Is there a *conceivable* situation where all of these conditions apply and which still leaves open the possibility of mistaken perception? If 'conceivable' is internally linked to 'imaginable', the answer must be yes. But then the further question must be asked: is 'imaginable' internally linked to 'possible'? First, let us consider the case where all conditions are fulfilled and we might still be in error. Charles Travis offers such a case. Suppose that A, 'in good health and lighting', is looking at a pen on his desk:

> He sees the pen on his desk. It is not wavy or fuzzy or otherwise ephemeral-looking. The lighting is good. As visual experiences go, A's here is first-class. A feels fine, is not crazy, etc. (1989, 138–9)

And yet, as Travis rightly remarks, the 'usual view is that, for all that, A might be wrong':

> It might not be a pen, but an FM radio in pen's clothing, or a weird Martian crystal, penlike at the moment, but on the verge of evaporation, or a spectacular hallucination, etc. (1989, 139)

Such, indeed, is – thank Descartes – 'the usual view': that there are always evil geniuses and weird Martians at bay to undermine certainty. And it must be pointed out that it is *only* such *imagined* and *imaginary* threats that have had any leverage on our certainty, for they alone remain unanswerable and unverifiable. But it should be noted that our inability to verify or preclude here is not an inability to invalidate a hypothesis, but only an inability to check *flights of the imagination*.[23] This is where we should stop confusing *imaginary threats* with serious possibilities. I return to this in the section, 'Logic in action: Wittgenstein's *logical pragmatism* and the impotence of scepticism' in Chapter 8.

It is easy enough to prevent error due to such possible scenarios as the pen being in fact an FM radio (and not a writing instrument at all): one need only highlight that the familiarity condition (4) requires familiarity *with the object at hand*, and not only with variations thereof. So that if the pen which I am looking at on my desk is the blue Bic which I purchased this morning and have been using ever since, there is no room for error about it being a pen (though it may *also*, unbeknownst to me, incorporate a very sophisticated

FM radio).[24] But what of the occurrence of some supernatural phenomenon such as weird Martian crystals? Short of such imaginary – indeed, for the most part, sci-fi – 'possibilities', the irrelevance of which is discussed in Chapter 8, there are no conceivable deceptive situations that can pair with hinge perceptual situations in a way that precludes indubitable perception.[25] In some cases, then, our perception is not vulnerable to mistake.

Wittgenstein made room for *indubitable perception* when he corrected the notion that there is *always* a *recognitional* or an *inferential* process between perception and certainty:[26]

> Asked 'Did you recognize your desk when you entered your room this morning?' – I should no doubt say 'Certainly!' And yet it would be misleading to say that an act of recognition had taken place. Of course the desk was not strange to me; I was not surprised to see it, as I should have been if another one had been standing there, or some unfamiliar kind of object. (PI 602)
>
> No one will say that every time I enter my room, my long-familiar surroundings, there is enacted a recognition of all that I see and have seen hundreds of times before. (PI 603)
>
> If I let my gaze wander round a room and suddenly it lights on an object of a striking red colour, and I say 'Red!' – that is not a description. (PI, p. 187)

In hinge perception, there is no epistemic gap, no room for hesitation, reflection or recognition, and so no possibility of mistake; one is *objectively*, not empirically, certain of what it is one perceives:

> If someone were to look at an English pillar-box and say 'I am sure that it's red', we should have to suppose that he was colour-blind, or believe he had no mastery of English and knew the correct name for the colour in some other language.
>
> If neither was the case we should not quite understand him. (OC 526)

In hinge perception, no epistemic route is followed, and therefore no epistemic fault *can* occur. In some cases, we are *incapable* of being wrong. The criterion by which hinge perception can be distinguished from what only *resembles* hinge perception is the satisfaction of all the conditions listed above for indubitable perception. Those conditions were fulfilled for Moore to be objectively certain that there were people in the room with him, but not for him to be certain that light was streaming from the sun. Similarly, I can be wrong about the person speaking to me being a woman, but not about her being a human being.

Stanley Cavell speaks of the hallucination or illusion of *meaning* – we can have, he writes, 'the illusion of meaning something' (1979, 221). In the same vein, we can counter the all-powerful 'possibility of illusion' with the more

intuitive, pragmatic, sensible 'illusion (or hallucination) of *possibility*'. Illusion is not always a viable possibility. There are cases where perception *cannot* be susceptible of illusion or doubt; cases where there is no question of truth or falsity, of correctness or incorrectness of perception because simply there is no room for error or fallibility. In certain circumstances, I *cannot* be wrong about seeing my computer screen and the letters I am typing:

> In certain circumstances a man cannot make a *mistake*. ('Can' is here used logically, and the proposition does not mean that a man cannot say anything false in those circumstances.) If Moore were to pronounce the opposite of those propositions which he declares certain, we should not just not share his opinion: we should regard him as demented. (OC 155)

Our external perceptual hinges are reminiscent of the 'basic propositions'[27] which Russell took to lie at the foundation of knowledge: that 'subclass of epistemological premises, namely those which are caused, as immediately as possible, by perceptive experiences' (1940, 137). Russell envisages the basic proposition as 'caused by some sensible occurrence' and yet to be 'of such a form that no other basic proposition can contradict it'; that is, to be of a 'logical form' (138). This is how he defines a 'basic proposition': 'a proposition which arises on occasion of a perception, which is the evidence for its truth, and it has a form such that no two propositions having this form can be mutually inconsistent if derived from different percepts' (139). Perceptual hinges can be seen as complying to this definition on all but one point: though they are occasioned by perception, that perception is not *evidence for the truth of the belief*. Perceptual hinges are not grounded on perception, but only caused by it – and so truth and evidence do not enter here.

Russell comes very close here to Wittgenstein's definition of the foundations of knowledge, but was impeded by his failure to distinguish between cause and reason, between what is empirical and what is merely experiential. Though our perceptual hinges 'assert some temporal occurrence', they are only caused by that occurrence, not made true by it.[28] The list of parameters for indubitable perception which I have offered above is a preliminary, unrefined attempt to spell out the conditions in which perception is so utterly devoid of hesitation or doubt, so impermeable to the threat of illusion or fantasy that its (artificial) formulation betrays no resemblance to an empirical proposition, but exhibits the rigidity of a logical necessity.[29] As Malcolm writes:

> In a certain important respect some *a priori* statements and some empirical statements possess the same logical character. The statement that $5 \times 5 = 25$ and that here is an ink-bottle, both lie beyond the reach of doubt. On both my judgment and reasoning *rests*. If you could somehow undermine my confidence in either, you would not teach me *caution*. You would fill my mind with *chaos*! (1952, 187)

7
Local and Universal Hinges

Some hinges are culture-linked. They are linked to our *localized* forms of human life[1] – those forms of life that have resulted from the extension of our instinctive, animal *experiencing* of the world into an active *consideration* of it. The term *local* has both a geographical and a temporal application. It applies to the world-picture of *some human beings at a given time*. Other hinges are not linked to specific cultures but have constituted the *human* world-picture, the scaffolding of human thought 'for unthinkable ages' (OC 211), and will go on doing so. These hinges are bounds of sense that are internally linked to our concept of a *human form of life*. If some remote tribe, which has never heard of Armstrong's giant step, cannot be said to share our local hinge: 'Man can walk on the moon', they cannot but share our *universal* hinge: 'Most adult men can walk.' Let us first examine our *local* hinges.

Local hinges

Some hinges mentioned by Wittgenstein, which I have classified as *local hinges* are: 'The existence of Napoleon', 'No one was ever on the moon', 'The earth is round', 'Trains normally arrive in a railway station' (OC 163, 106, 291, 339). *Local* hinges constitute the underlying framework of knowledge of *some human beings at a given time*. They are culture-variant and many of them *seem* to be the product of empirical observation (e.g. 'The earth is round', 'Trains normally arrive in a railway station') or epistemic inquiry (e.g. 'The existence of Napoleon', 'No one was ever on the moon'). Their resemblance to empirical or epistemic propositions makes local hinges the best illustration of what Wittgenstein means when he writes that 'the same proposition [*der gleiche Satz*] may get treated at one time as something to test by experience, at another as a rule of testing' (OC 98):

> It might be imagined that some propositions [*Sätze*], of the form of empirical propositions [*Erfahrungssätze*], were hardened and functioned as channels for such empirical propositions [*Erfahrungssätze*] as were not

> hardened but fluid; and that this relation altered with time, in that fluid propositions [*Sätze*] hardened, and hard ones became fluid. (OC 96)
>
> The mythology may change back into a state of flux, the river-bed of thoughts may shift. But I distinguish between the movement of the waters on the river-bed and the shift of the bed itself; though there is not a sharp division of the one from the other. (OC 97)
>
> But if someone were to say 'So logic too is an empirical science' he would be wrong. Yet this is right: the same proposition [*der gleiche Satz*] may get treated at one time as something to test by experience, at another as a rule of testing. (OC 98)

But that a hypothesis can turn into a hinge seems to suggest that hinges *can* be derived from scientific or empirical investigation. Is our certainty then based on knowledge after all? Are we going back to the old epistemic sovereignty? If, as it is maintained throughout *On Certainty*, hinges *underlie* our enquiries, how is it that a hinge can stem from an enquiry? Local hinges are those that most appear to expose the bedrock to threats of empiricism. I now endeavour to dissipate these threats.

The *transformational metaphor*: local hinges as *hardened* empirical propositions

The image, used in the first two passages of the riverbed metaphor quoted above, of a (possible) *transformation* from empirical proposition to hinge and vice versa has led commentators to relate Wittgenstein to Quine, to assume that hinge 'propositions' are nothing but empirical propositions that have been accorded a regulative status (cf. section, '*Foundational*: hinges do not result from justification' in Chapter 4). Wittgenstein's image of the proposition *hardening* into a rule does not help. He had used it in the *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*:

> It is as if we had hardened the empirical proposition into a rule. And now we have, not an hypothesis that gets tested by experience, but a paradigm with which experience is compared and judged. And so a new kind of judgment. (RFM, p. 324)
>
> … an empirical proposition hardened into a rule … It is thus withdrawn from being checked by experience, but now serves as a paradigm for judging experience. (RFM, p. 325)

And it appears again in the first of the riverbed passages:

> It might be imagined that some propositions, of the form of empirical propositions, were hardened and functioned as channels for such empirical propositions as were not hardened but fluid; and that this relation altered with time, in that fluid propositions hardened, and hard ones became fluid. (OC 96)

Here, Wittgenstein is saying that the status of our propositions seems not to be permanently fixed: a priori, or 'hard', propositions can become objects of investigation, hypotheses; and our hypotheses can become 'fluid' or empirical propositions. As he writes in the passage following: 'The mythology may change back to a state of flux, the river-bed of thoughts may shift.' These *transformational* images give the impression that there is a difference of degree, not a categorial difference, between empirical propositions and rules. And yet, Wittgenstein immediately invalidates that assumption:

> But I distinguish between the movement of the waters on the river-bed and the shift of the bed itself; though there is not a sharp division of the one from the other. (OC 97)

'I distinguish … ', writes Wittgenstein. There is a division here, and its lack of sharpness should not camouflage its presence, should not entice us to conflate logic and science: 'But if someone were to say "So logic too is an empirical science" he would be wrong' (OC 98). And indeed, we have seen that there is a categorial difference, not just one of degree, between empirical propositions and rules. Yet, now we must ask, how can we redeem Wittgenstein's employment of transformational images? If there were a transformation – a hardening – would not that imply the existence of a substrate of some kind undergoing the transformation? What is it then that turns from a hypothesis to a norm of description, and vice versa? The answer is: a sentence.

> Yet this is right: the same proposition [*Satz*] may get treated at one time as something to test by experience, at another as a rule of testing. (OC 98)

This passage is a case where *Satz* should have been translated as 'sentence'. It is not the same *proposition*, but an identical string of words, or *sentence*, that can at one time serve as a hypothesis and at another, as a rule. Indeed, in spite of the transformational metaphor (OC 96), nothing *turns* from hypothesis to norm, but the same sentence *gets treated* at one time as a hypothesis and at another as a norm. The qualifiers: 'at one time … at another' establish that the differing treatments are not synchronous: what is *now* a hypothesis or an empirical proposition ('something to test by experience') may *at another time*, get treated as 'a rule of testing' – and vice versa. This, then, is not to say that the categories are blurred, but that the same sentence can have different functions at different times, and *can* therefore belong to different categories each time. Here is an example of what I will call the *diachronic* account, whereby the same sentence has differing categorial statuses *at different times*:

> *'Human beings cannot walk on the moon' was a 'hard' sentence, part of the indubitable, inherited world-picture that Wittgenstein shared with his*

> *contemporaries. With the undertaking and media transmission of research in lunar travel, the sentence was no longer treated as a norm (was no longer 'hard'), but as a hypothesis (it became 'fluid'). And the day Armstrong walked on the moon, it lost its hardness, as well as its fluidity, altogether (it was no longer treated as a norm or as a hypothesis).*

A *synchronic* interpretation of 'at one time … at another' is also possible, whereby the difference in category does not depend on the passage of time or the progress of science. Here the same sentence can have different categorial statuses *at any given time*, though in different uses. For example:

> *'This is a hand', pronounced in cases – like learning English – where it would be nonsense to doubt it, is a 'hard' sentence (functioning as a grammatical or logical rule); in other cases – where for instance, I utter it in response to the optometrist testing my poor eyesight who has asked me to identify the object he is waving in front of my eyes – it is a 'fluid' sentence (a hypothesis).*

In each account, *one* string of words has *two* different uses and statuses. But whereas, in the first account, a change of status *results* from a change of function of *the same* sentence; in the second, no transformation occurs. Here, we have instead one sentence serving two categorially distinct uses: a grammatical and a hypothetical one. The categorial difference here is necessary, if not obvious: there is no way of using the proposition hypothetically without implicitly relying on its separate grammatical *doppelgänger*. That is, I could not wonder about *whether or not* this is a hand being waved in front of my eyes if *what a hand is* were not independently grammatically fixed for me and any competent speaker of English. The latter string of words constitutes one of the *rules* without which I could not properly engage in the empirical testing proposed by my optometrist. *Synchronic* cases are unproblematic inasmuch as there being *two* simultaneous and heterogeneous uses of the same sentence facilitates categorial distinction. But *diachronic* transformations of 'the same sentence' (OC 98; my translation) from hard to fluid may indeed give the impression that there is an empirical or an epistemic process going on whereby empirical propositions become rules of testing (or vice versa), and that there is no categorial difference between the two. Yet this is only an impression, to which Wittgenstein himself seems at times to succumb: 'Is it that rule and empirical proposition merge into one another?' (OC 309). Wittgenstein's conclusion is that they do not. There *is* a boundary between them, albeit not a sharp one:

> But wouldn't one have to say then, that there is no sharp boundary between propositions of logic and empirical propositions?
>
> The lack of sharpness *is* that of the boundary between *rule* and empirical proposition. (OC 319)

This cannot be seen as equivalent to, or even approximating, Quine's 'field' of statements or beliefs, where it would be 'folly to seek a boundary between synthetic statements … and analytic statements' (1953, 43). In the above passage, Wittgenstein stresses the platitude that to say that a boundary is not 'sharp' is not to say that there is no boundary. But rather, that the boundary is difficult to see: it is one of these inconspicuous things that philosophy must highlight. Indeed that *the very same sentence* can be used in differing capacities makes the categorial difference difficult to see. As difficult as distinguishing identical twins.

Replacing the transformational metaphor: *the doppelgänger*

> … you have to take into account, not just the words used; one who says 'It's a pig' will sometimes have evidence for saying so, sometimes not; one can't say that the *sentence* 'It's a pig', as such, is of a kind for which evidence is essentially required.
>
> J.L. Austin (1962, 116)

Wittgenstein rightly speaks in terms of a confusion between form and use ('not everything that has the form of an empirical proposition *is* one' (OC 308)), but I believe the notion of *doppelgänger* more *vividly* illustrates the source of confusion here. Wittgenstein does not use this term, but it will help clarify what Wittgenstein is himself attempting to clarify. When Wittgenstein says that a sentence sometimes misleadingly has *the form of* an empirical proposition, he means that sometimes sentences that *look like, resemble*, empirical propositions are not empirical propositions. Granted, this resemblance is misleading enough: 'Here is a hand' has the form of an empirical proposition, but is not, in certain circumstances, an empirical proposition. However, the utmost confusion occurs when a grammatical proposition not only *has the form of* or *resembles* an empirical proposition, but *is identical to* an empirical proposition. That is, when the expression of a rule and the expression of an empirical proposition are *doppelgänger*: identical sentences. This is the situation Wittgenstein refers to when he speaks of 'der gleiche Satz' getting treated at one time as an empirical proposition, at another as a rule (OC 98). From having served as a hypothesis, the sentence: 'Human beings can walk on the moon' has become a rule of testing. The sentence no longer acts as a hypothesis, but as a logical rule: it cannot be (meaningfully) doubted; it no longer requires justification; it is the matter-of-course and unmentioned foundation of any further research (OC 167). Translating 'der gleiche Satz' as: 'the same sentence' (rather than: 'the same proposition') in OC 98, eliminates the idea that an uncontextualized proposition or meaning undergoes transformation, and replaces it with the much more Wittgensteinian idea that the same sentence can have different uses, and therefore different statuses. *Doppelgänger* are identical sentences with different *uses*, and therefore different *statuses*. Depending on the

context, the same sentence (e.g. 'I have a body') can be used to function as a *rule* of grammar, an empirical *proposition* or a spontaneous *expression*. The *doppelgänger of a hinge* is a sentence made up of the same words as a hinge, but which does not *function* as a hinge.

But let us fit this talk of sentences into a doxastic framework. What is it to 'treat' a sentence as a rule at one time, and as a hypothesis at another? Here, again, 'treat the same sentence' is slightly misleading, for it seems as if there were a sentence there, in advance of use that can be treated in several ways. In fact, it is simply that we *use* a sentence as a norm at one time (and therefore the sentence is not *said* or mentioned in our language-games), and we use an identical sentence as a hypothesis at another time (and in this capacity, the sentence is mentioned, and indeed questioned). The difference between primitive beliefs (hinges) and nonprimitive beliefs resides in their mode of occurrence. Primitive beliefs or hinges have no verbal occurrence (they lie, unmentioned, on an unused siding (OC 210)), but they manifest themselves *in* our verbal and nonverbal behaviour. Nonprimitive beliefs, on the other hand, are dispositions whose occurrence is verbal. So that I can (meaningfully) say, in conversation, '(I believe that) France is smaller than Canada'; but not '(I believe that) this glass is smaller than Canada'. This makes clear that the category of hinge or primitive beliefs covers what are standardly called 'tacit beliefs'.

Some primitive beliefs, though not all,[2] are giveupable. That is, some go from being *hard* beliefs (norms of testing) to being *fluid* beliefs (hypotheses), and to being beliefs no longer. In less metaphorical terms, this means that the (hinge) disposition to believe *x* (which manifests itself solely as a way of acting) changes to a (nonhinge) disposition to believe *x* (which manifests itself verbally) and eventually to the absence of a disposition (of any kind) to believe *x*. Let us take an example. 'A human being must be the offspring of two human beings' – This was (and still is for many people) a hinge belief. This means that it was a *dispositional certainty* whose only possible occurrence was ineffable: it could not be a *verbal* occurrence (it could not be *said*), but could only *manifest in what we said* (e.g. in asking children who their father *and* their mother was) and *in what we did* (e.g. an orphan would look for *both* her parents if she wanted to find out who she came from). As scientific progress was made with cloning, the dispositional belief: 'A human being must be the offspring of two human beings' began manifesting itself *verbally* (in scientific circles) because it was being questioned; scientific discovery had dislodged it from its hinge status, and so its occurrence was no longer of an ineffable nature. The belief 'A human being must be the offspring of two human beings' went from being a disposition that had no meaningful verbal occurrence (an unmentioned norm) to a disposition that did (a hypothesis), and it will eventually no longer be a disposition/belief at all. Another belief is replacing it: 'A human being can be the offspring of a single human being', which remains still today for many people a hypothesis, and for

most people still a novelty, and so it still *bears saying*; its occurrence can be verbal. The repetition, drill, familiarity, banality, needed for it to become a hinge – that is, a disposition that can only meaningfully manifest itself ineffably – have not yet occurred. When they do, the sentence: 'A human being can be the offspring of a single human being' will have the status of a norm of description which is 'removed from the traffic … shunted onto an unused siding' (OC 210), that is, not *said*. It is not, then, that *something*, like a noncontextualized proposition, goes from being a norm of description to being a hypothesis and vice versa, but that we have different beliefs (or dispositions), and depending on how we meaningfully manifest these beliefs, they can be classified as primitive or empirical or, indeed, obsolete.

The *transformational* metaphor has hindered commentators from perceiving that it is not a single proposition, susceptible of change, that is at stake here, but *two* identical sentences of which one is an empirical proposition and the other a paradigm or rule. Each string of words belongs to a distinct category with distinct features and should be treated as such, thereby avoiding both undue relativism and the confusion of logic and empiricism. To speak in terms of a transformation occurring is to make it seem as if a single *proposition* were incurring change; and as if, in hardening into a rule, the empirical proposition does so through something like verification or confirmation. Moreover, the image of a proposition, or of meaning, *hardening* is too Platonic to suit Wittgenstein's view of things. Although we can satisfactorily avoid both the Platonism and the empiricism generated by the *transformational* metaphor by stressing that the transformation, the *hardening*, is not that of the proposition, but that of our attitude to a sentence (be it a proposition or a rule); and that this hardening is due not to an *empirical*, but to a *nonempirical process* – the kind of solidifying that results from drill, repetition and all sorts of nonpropositional assimilation – the notion of *doppelgänger* is more useful than that of a *transformation* in targeting the insidious source of confusion – identical *appearance* – and in highlighting the distinction between the *form* of language and its *use*. The same *form* does not mean the same *use*, or indeed the same *status*; the same sentence can perform many tasks. The idea of a *doppelgänger* avoids the problems conjured up by the transformational metaphor, of boundaries, of migration of the same proposition from one category to another or of solidification of *sense*. Instead, we realize that identical sentences can be used at one time to express a rule, at another, to express an empirical proposition; and that, in one case, the sentence is not falsifiable (or verifiable), in the other it is.

To say that a hinge can originate in a hypothesis is not to say that an empirical proposition has been granted a priori status *because* of confirmation, verification, observation and the like. It is no longer the case that, for most twentieth-century cultures, the string of words 'Man cannot walk on the moon' expresses a hinge; and it is the case that the string of words: 'Man can walk on the moon' does, but this is *not because one has been falsified, and*

the other verified. Rather, since 1969, the first sentence no longer formulates a bound of sense for many human beings – it has, to speak metaphorically, been withdrawn from bedrock – and the other does – it has entered bedrock. I now examine how a hinge enters bedrock.

The in(fusion) of certainty

> If we imagine the facts otherwise than as they are, certain language-games lose some of their importance, while others become important. And in this way there is an alteration – a gradual one – in the use of the vocabulary of a language
>
> (OC 63)

It will be objected that: 'Man can walk on the moon' *is* the negation of 'Man cannot walk on the moon', and that the *truth* of the first proposition is warranted by the fact that Armstrong did walk on the moon. And yet, there is more here than meets the eye. Indeed, some 'facts' – as also, some empirical conclusions and some experiences – are responsible for our having the hinges we do. But our hinges are never *justified* by any fact (conclusion or experience), and can therefore not be *falsified* by any fact (conclusion or experience) either: 'previous experience may very well be the *cause* of my present certitude; but is it its ground?' (OC 429). The connection of facts to hinges is never a *rational* connection. When a fact *is* at the origin of our certainty, it is as a cause, not as a ground of our certainty. A fact which repetition hammers, as it were, into our foundations:

> We say we know that water boils and does not freeze under such-and-such circumstances. Is it conceivable that we are wrong? Wouldn't a mistake topple all judgment with it? More: what could stand if that were to fall? Might someone discover something that made us say 'It was a mistake'?
>
> Whatever may happen in the future, however water may behave in the future, – we *know* that up to now it has behaved *thus* in innumerable instances.
>
> This fact is fused [*eingegossen*] into the foundations of our language-game. (OC 558)

Some facts have been fused into bedrock, have become part of our conceptual scaffolding.[3] Wittgenstein's image of *a fact* being *fused into* (or infused, or cast in, or poured into: *eingegossen*) our foundations is deliberate and crucial. It reminds us that many conceptual necessities are related to facts (or a posteriori discoveries), but that these facts have become part of our foundational or grammatical bedrock *through a nonepistemic process* (though our initial awareness of them might have been epistemic or empirical). Essentially, in the last sentence of the above passage, Wittgenstein is saying,

before Kripke, that some of our conceptual necessities have their origin in a posteriori discoveries. As Rom Harre and E.H. Madden explain:

> It is contingent that any man is a father, but conceptually necessary that being a father he has (or has had) a child. But that conceptual necessity is a reflection of the natural necessity of the father's role in the reproductive process, a role not known to some Aboriginal tribes even in historical times, for whom the conceptual structure of the concept 'father' was very different from ours. The conceptual necessity has come into being in response to an *a posteriori* discovery of the natural necessity of the father's role. … But so deeply has this conceptual necessity become embedded in the language, we forget that it has its source in an *a posteriori* discovery. (1975, 48)

The term: 'embedded', like 'fused', is meant to convey the nonratiocinated manner in which a posteriori conclusions have infiltrated our language-games. Indeed, that infiltration or assimilation be nonratiocinated is essential if grammar is to be autonomous. The terms 'fused' and 'embedded' call to mind others which Wittgenstein uses when he wants to avoid reference to an epistemic or rational assimilation: *conditioned* (OC 617), *swallowing* or *absorption* (OC 143), and of course: *hardened* (OC 96). The fact of Armstrong's walking on the moon did not negate what was expressed by the sentence 'Man cannot walk on the moon', for *that* was not a proposition at all (it was a nonpropositional certainty that belonged to the *foundations* of our language-game); what it did was prompt the withdrawal of the hinge from our foundations. And it did not leave in its stead another hinge, but nothing at all. For, it would take time before the fact that man can walk on the moon became *fused* into the foundations of our language-game. Let us briefly follow the (in)fusion process.

At the time of Armstrong's giant step, the sentence 'Man can walk on the moon' constituted a headline, which most people greeted with astonishment while others questioned its veracity. But repeated showings of the footage of Armstrong's giant step; multiple allusions to it in the media by journalists, politicians, scientists, and so on, all contributed to drilling what was once a spectacular piece of news, part of the *fluid waters* of knowledge, into the *nonepistemic bedrock* of knowledge of most (not all) twentieth-century cultures. With time and multifarious forms of repetition, that 'man can walk on the moon' became 'assumed as a truism, never called in question, perhaps not even ever formulated' (OC 87). We can now no more doubt that human beings can walk on the moon than that they can walk at all. That is, the sentence: 'Man can walk on the moon' has a logical status in some human contexts (e.g. post-1969 Western world), which does not preclude an identical sentence (a *doppelgänger*) from having (had) an empirical or an epistemic, or indeed a fictional status in other (temporal or geographical)

human contexts (e.g. pre-1969 world; some of post-1969 world). Though we once propositionally learned that 'Man can walk on the moon', it is not *as a proposition*, or as an empirical conclusion, that this certainty entered the *bedrock* of our thoughts, but *as a rule*. It has been *drilled* or *fused* into the bedrock much as '2 + 2 = 4', and there enjoys the same grammatical status. However spectacular, empirical propositions gain no entry into the bedrock of our thoughts. It is only once the initial period of novelty has passed, once the certainty has lost its epistemic glow, once it no longer requires propositional assimilation and acknowledgement, in sum once it is no longer an empirical, but a grammatical certainty that it infiltrates the subsoil. It is only in their unreasoned or reflex-like state that beliefs belong to the substratum of our thoughts and acts; only once conditioning has *hardened* an object of thought into a rule of thought. The possibility of going to the moon is becoming as inconspicuous and undramatic a part of our belief system as the possibility of going to China. No need to refer to its possibility, to acknowledge it. Yet as empirical propositions, these were once of conspicuous and dramatic interest.

Wittgenstein never suggested that our grammar is impervious to scientific investigation and explanation, only that it is not *justified* by it. Though an empirical discovery may be the *origin* of our nonepistemic certainty, though it may have *caused* it, it does not *ground* it or *justify* it. This ensures the *autonomy* of grammar, of our conceptual framework.

Certainty does not share its ground with knowledge, it grounds knowledge. Though the *cause* of our certainty has been or can be scientifically (at)tested, though we can and in some cases do *know* the cause of our being certain, this knowledge makes no ratiocinated contribution to our *objective* certainty. Just as looking at our hands does not prove their existence to us, we can no longer feel that we *could* be mistaken about man's ability to walk on the moon, or that a doubt there could be satisfactorily removed by looking in an encyclopaedia.

The mutability of some hinges[4]

That our world-picture is not always in harmony with the way the world is – the earth being round when we were hinged on it being flat – does not make our world-picture an erroneous one: 'I have a right to say "I can't be making a mistake about this" even if I am in error' (OC 663). At times, science makes some of our hinges obsolete, 'but that does not deprive the question "Can you be [mistaken]?" and the answer "No" of their meaning' (OC 596). 'Humans cannot go to the moon' was a hinge when Wittgenstein was writing; the fact that it is today possible for human beings to go to the moon does not 'give the lie' to Wittgenstein's certainty. Avishai Margalit is wrong to say that 'the fact of Armstrong's landing … should undermine [Wittgenstein's] claim that no one *had been* on the moon' (1989, 208; my emphasis). He is also out of order when he accuses Wittgenstein of being

mistaken or 'moon-blind' on the grounds that scientific data was at odds with Wittgenstein's hinge certainty at the time he held it; that the physics at his disposal were 'sufficient to provide answers to questions such as how it is possible to overcome the force of gravity on a flight to the moon', and that all of Armstrong's 'steps on the moon were taken in accordance with the physics that was known to Newton, even if not in accordance with the technology available to Newton' (ibid., 209–10). Whatever the state of empirical or theoretical science when Wittgenstein was alive, it remains that he could not have been lying or mistaken when he objectively believed that it was 'not possible to get to the moon' (OC 286), for nothing had occurred in 1950 to dislodge this hinge from the lay person's bedrock. When he ruled out the sensicality of saying 'Man can go to the moon', Wittgenstein was hinged on what was then a rule of thought, and he was therefore 'incapable of falsehood' (OC 436).[5]

To say that some of our hinges can change is not to open the door to fallibility. Nor does the possibility of foundational mutability engender the possibility of *freak mutability*, as it were. In Wittgenstein's lifetime, and prior to it, the idea that humans could walk on the moon seemed as fantastic as the sci-fi or utopian literature it appeared in. As fantastic perhaps as water possibly freezing on the gas stove.[6] Today, in 2004, the fact that humans can walk on the moon has lost its mind-boggling impact. Though the change in real time is usually a major one, a 'giant step' in our form of life, Wittgenstein is clear: the shift in our foundational bedrock, in the configuration of our world-picture, remains hardly perceptible. In saying that if there is a change in our bedrock, it is only 'an imperceptible one' (OC 99), Wittgenstein does not mean to minimize the impact of *the facts* leading to the alteration of our world-picture (that humans can walk on the moon had a perceptible, indeed spectacular, effect on our form of life), but the impact on the *world-picture* itself: the state of scientific progress was such that Armstrong's walking on the moon caused an imperceptible alteration to the world-picture of the 1960s, whereas it would have toppled that of, say, Christopher Columbus. Though the rumble and the tremor of concept-shaking events may be spectacular and dramatic in scientific or social terms, these events do not constitute incoherent leaps in our form of life: it was possible for prehistoric man or woman to invent the wheel, not the television set. Revision of our conceptual system cannot be, as Wittgenstein puts it, a 'deviation from the usual *in an unusual direction*' (Z 67). Our abandoning some hinges and adopting others does not plunge everything into chaos. Our world-picture stands altered, imperceptibly, not threatened. Nor should foundational mutability conjure up the spectre of psychologism. A change, say, in the axioms of mathematics would originate in an aware, concerted agreement engaging only mathematicians, then the community at large, but with time and practice, this agreement would lose its conscious and concerted nature, thereby becoming ingrained, systematic and

unreasoned. Similarly, our way of thinking about time as well as space has changed and is changing. Still at the empirical phase, the present change – which includes the particular development of the concept of 'time-space' – is gradual, slowly seeping out of the labs of physicists into our sociocultural jargon until its eventual lapse into ineffability or nonpropositionality. By the time the hypothesis gives way to a hinge, the alteration in our world-picture will be hardly perceptible.

Whereas some hinges are giveupable, others we can *never* be brought to abandon. These are our universal hinges. In our human form of life, the hinge: 'The world is more than five minutes old' is not susceptible of mutation or obsolescence. A doubt here would drag all our ability to think and act along with it and plunge it into chaos. It would mean the total collapse of our world-picture: 'I cannot depart from this *judgment* without toppling all other judgments with it' (OC 419). Here, again, a rapprochement between Wittgenstein and Quine is not warranted.

Universal hinges

> There is something universal here, not just something personal.
> (OC 440)

The unrevisability[7] of some hinges: Wittgenstein versus Quine, again

In her likening of Wittgenstein to Quine, Pieranna Garavaso wrongly assigns to the author of *On Certainty* the Quinean contention that 'no statement is immune to revision' (1953, 43) (Garavaso 1998, 257). From Wittgenstein's admission that '*some* propositions, of the form of empirical propositions' (OC 96; my emphasis) harden into rules and vice versa, Garavaso concludes that: 'No propositions are in principle excluded from the possibility of revision'[8] (257). But this is to dismiss one of the most anti-Quinean points in *On Certainty*: in our system of beliefs, some are immovable:

> Isn't the question this: 'What if you had to change your opinion even on these most fundamental things?' And to that the answer seems to me to be: 'You don't *have* to change it. That is just what their being "fundamental" is.' (OC 512)

There *is* a difference between some beliefs and others. Our hinge beliefs stand fast *ungrounded*, on no grounds; they *are the ground*. So that giving them up would make one *lose ground*, as it were:

> What if it *seemed* to turn out that what until now has seemed immune to doubt was a false assumption? Would I react as I do when a belief has proved to be false? or would it seem to knock from under my feet the

> ground on which I stand in making any judgments at all? – But of course I do not intend this as a *prophecy*.
>
> Would I simply say 'I should never have thought it!' – or would I (have to) refuse to revise my judgment – because such a 'revision' would amount to annihilation of all yardsticks? (OC 492)

One of the leitmotifs of *On Certainty* is that all our hinges are impervious to *doubt*. And yet, it must be granted, this does not make them forever immune to *rejection*. That I *cannot* doubt the 'propositions' that stand fast for me, is not always meant as a prophecy:

> Now can I prophesy that men will never throw away the present arithmetical propositions, never say that now at last they know how the matter stands? Yet would that justify a doubt on our part? (OC 652)

It would not. But indubitability is *not* a sufficient condition for ungiveupability. That 'I cannot doubt this proposition without giving up all judgment' (OC 494) does not imply that I will *never* be able to reject this proposition without giving up all judgment. Wittgenstein, we have seen in the last section, *does* make room for revision within the class of our foundational beliefs; he does not, however, do so *in principle*, as Garavaso suggests, but only *in part*. Within the hard-rock category of our foundational beliefs, *all* are indubitable; but some can conceivably be rejected, while others cannot. This is clearly stated in one of the riverbed passages:

> And the bank of that river consists partly of hard rock, *subject to no alteration* or only to an imperceptible one, partly of sand … (OC 99; my emphasis)

To conclude from the riverbed passages that there are no unrevisable propositions or, as Mark Sacks puts it, that 'there is no fixed hard-rock of the river-bed' (1997, 170), is to have missed the qualification emphasized in the passage above.[9] Wittgenstein's bedrock has nothing of the smoothness of the Quinean web of beliefs. It is striated. That some hinges are revisable does not make the whole bedrock revisable. Whereas in Quine's epistemic picture, the revisability of *all* our beliefs is envisaged – any recalcitrant experience can 'be accommodated by any of various alternative reevaluations in various alternative quarters of the total system' (1953, 44) – in Wittgenstein's system, some of our beliefs are immovable. Indeed, where Quine would accommodatingly appeal to 'hallucination' (1953, 43) to make plausible my doubting that 'Here is a hand', Wittgenstein would simply reply that 'In certain circumstances a man cannot make a *mistake*. ("Can" is here used logically …)' (OC 155). It is an error to associate Wittgenstein with the Quinean contention that no statement is immune to revision, as also

Putnam does:

> Recognizing that there are certain places where one's spade is turned; recognizing, with Wittgenstein that there are places where our explanations run out, isn't saying that any particular place is *permanently* fated to be 'bedrock', or that any particular belief is forever immune from criticism. This is where my spade is turned *now*. This is where my justifications and explanations stop *now*. (1987, 85)

Contrary to what Putnam assumes, Wittgenstein *does* say that some of our foundational beliefs are *subject to no alteration*. They *are* permanently fated to be bedrock. They *cannot* be abandoned without our whole system of beliefs toppling. The hinge: 'Ice melts when removed from subzero confines' may one day no longer be part of the scaffolding of our thoughts,[10] but: 'The world exists' is something that has naturally and universally stood fast for human beings and will continue to do so. No scientific progress can prompt the alteration of our universal hinges – some hinges, we can never relinquish, as long as we want to be *making sense* in a *human* world.[11]

Amongst the various strands of our sense-making grammars, there is one that is fixed, permanent and universal. Or, to use a more Wittgensteinian image: our foundational bedrock has an immutable stratum. There are hinges upon which all human knowledge, at any time, in any place, has revolved and will revolve. Strawson's 'big four' can be counted amongst these *universal hinges*: (1) the existence of body/world/external objects; (2) the existence of other minds; (3) the reliability of induction; (4) the reality and determinateness of the past (1985, 27, 29); as are Wright's 'group III propositions' (1985). Moore's shortlist of 'truisms' of which he says 'I *know*, with certainty to be true', includes some of Strawson's, Wright's and more:

> There exists at present a living human body, which is *my* body. This body was born at a certain time in the past, and has existed continuously ever since, though not without undergoing changes; it was, for instance, much smaller when it was born, and for some time afterwards, than it is now. … there have also existed many other things, having shape and size … from which it has been *at various distances* …; also there have … existed some other things of this kind with which it was *in contact* … Among the things which have … formed part of its environment (i.e. have been either in contact with it, or at *some* distance from it, however *great*) there have … been large numbers of other living human bodies, each of which has, like it, … at some time been born, … and many of these bodies have already died and ceased to exist. But the earth had existed also for many years before my body was born … Finally (to come to a different class of propositions), I am a human being, and I have, at different times since my body was born, had many different experiences,

> of each of many different kinds: e.g. I have often perceived both my own body and other things which formed part of its environment, including other human bodies … I have had expectations with regard to the future, and many beliefs of other kinds, both true and false; I have thought of imaginary things and persons and incidents, in the reality of which I did not believe; … and I have had feelings of many different kinds. (1925, 33–4)

To these, we can add diverse other universal hinges: for example, 'Humans cannot turn into birds or birds into humans', 'A human baby cannot look after itself', 'My shadow or my reflection in the mirror cannot come to life', 'The severed head and body of a human being cannot rejoin and the person resume her daily activities' – and these two, culled from Descartes: 'Human beings are not made of glass; human heads are not made of earthenware' (1641, 13). But universal hinges are innumerable.

Our foundational beliefs are *not* all susceptible of obsolescence. Those that are not make up our 'universal grammar': our *human* bounds of sense. A universal grammar that is *not* a decontextualized grammar. There are different *kinds of contexts* that ensure the meaning of our words and the status of our sentences: some are particular or individual contexts; others are local: they are the different *forms of human life*; and there is one context that is universal: our *human form of life*. Russell was wrong to think it '*possible* that all or any of our beliefs may be mistaken' (1912, 12). There are hinges without which the concept of humanity itself would lose all sense. Hinges that cannot be tampered with.

It may be objected that some of what I have called *universal* hinges (e.g. 'When human beings die, they cannot be made to live again') are in fact not *universal*. Some religious beliefs – for example, belief in resurrection, in ghosts, in some individuals being inhabited by spirits – appear to transgress *universal* bounds of sense. This objection will be examined in the section, 'The delusion of doubt' in Chapter 8.

Having surveyed our hinges and seen that our foundations are not uniform, but striated, we must now consider whether these striations are drawn in any hierarchical relation to one another. Are some hinges – say, our universal ones – more fundamental than others?

Priority of some hinges?

> Philosophy should show us the hierarchy of our instinctive beliefs …
> Russell 1912, *The Problems of Philosophy*

The dichotomy I have introduced between *conditioned* and *instinctive* hinges is compatible with Avrum Stroll's consideration of the bedrock as related to the community and the world, but I question his contention that one has

priority over the other:

> … it is the existence of the earth that is the starting-point of belief for every human being. … There are thus two different components to our inherited background. There is the community … and there is the world. … The world, taken as a totality, represents *the deepest level of certitude*, having *a kind of priority* with respect to the community. For unless the inorganic world existed there would be no human communities. (1994, 180–1; my emphasis)

Stroll would consider some hinges – such as 'The world exists' – as expressing a *deeper* certitude than others, and 'having a kind of priority' over those that have to do with community. We must beware here of making the striated bedrock into a *hierarchically* striated bedrock. There is no gradation in our *holding fast*: we either do or we do not. But more importantly, I believe Stroll is wrong in suggesting that the *chronological* priority of the existence of the world entails its priority *in our system of beliefs*. Granted, it would not be logically possible for me to believe in the community or in myself were there no world, but nor could I believe in the world did the community or I not exist. My certainty about the existence of the world is inextricably intertwined with *my* living in the world, living that is, *as an individual, in the context of a community*. As a human being, I know no other context but a peopled context. My certainty regarding the existence of the world, the community and myself did not develop in three consecutive and hierarchically significant stages. The idea of a human world is for me simultaneously and necessarily – internally, that is – linked to that of a community. There is no extricating one from the other. I could no more conceive of a human world devoid of community as I could of a human community devoid of a world. The existence of the organic world may be *temporally* prior to, and hence a *physically* necessary precondition for, the existence of human communities, but this does not make it *conceptually* prior. The chronological precedence of the world's existence to both that of the community and of the individual in no way dictates the order, depth or priority of my beliefs.

That the origin of some of our hinges is agreement does not make them less fundamental or necessary. Being a full-fledged member of the human form of life entails being compelled to act according to the limits drawn by agreement as well as instinct. Normativity and biology, social and natural behaviour, agreement and instinct condition one another as the inextricably linked components of our form of life. Both essential to our human condition and to the conditions of our being human. That we are *born* (biologically) *human* does not make *that* given a more decisive or essential one than the fact that we are born *into* a human community. Convention is *as* essentially constitutive of our fundamental beliefs, of the 'common behaviour of mankind' (PI 206), of our being human, as our biological make-up.

It is part of the common behaviour of mankind that its members act according to convention and agreement. The stratification within the bedrock is not a hierarchical one. *All* our hinges are held unshakeably fast at any given time, *all* unquestionably and democratically *cohere* whilst they belong to our world-picture, albeit not all are *inherent* in it. Not all, that is, are permanently fixed hinges upon which human thoughts and acts have always turned and will always turn. But wherever the defining line of humanity may be, it cannot bypass agreement, convention or community. That the object of agreement is susceptible of change does not make agreement itself a dispensable object.

Objectivism without absolutism

Mythology or *Weltbild*

> It is true that we can compare a picture that is firmly rooted in us to a superstition; but it is equally true that we always eventually have to reach some firm ground, either a picture or something else, so that a picture which is at the root of all our thinking is to be respected and not treated as a superstition.
>
> (CV 83)

Our world-picture is 'inherited' (OC 94), and Wittgenstein also says it is 'part of a kind of mythology' (OC 95). This suggests that our world-picture does not mirror the world that it has nothing to do with truth or falsity. Indeed: 'It is the inherited background against which I distinguish between truth and falsity' (94). This estrangement from truth should not be seen as alienating our world-picture from reality: our *Weltbild* is conditioned by reality, if not justified by it. Nor should its not being *grounded* in reality make our world-picture less reliable: 'To use the word without a justification does not mean to use it wrongfully' (RFM 406). Our world-picture is a kind of mythology in that it is not *based on* evidence, but *acts as* evidence. This should not spur scientific disdain. To think of our hinges as hasty, superficial acts of faith is to disregard the unflinching efficacy with which they run our daily lives and underpin our science. Indeed, lest we forget, hinges are the logical basis on which knowledge and science perform.

Contingent necessity

But science is not the worst detractor to be feared here. Philosophy, too, does not take well to having its logical basis, its concept of *logical necessity*, reduced from an *all-worldly* concept to a *this-worldly* concept. Wittgenstein has traded in an abstract, speculative, human-independent logical form for anthropocentric bounds of sense. Gertrude Conway sees the shift in Wittgenstein's preoccupation from linguistic *form* in the *Tractatus* to his

post-Tractarian emphasis on linguistic *function* as a 'move which will be completed with the shift from *logical form* to the *form of life*' (1989, 21). The traditional view, endorsed by the *Tractatus*, of the a priori as 'a transhuman account of logical form' is abandoned in favour of what Conway calls 'a concrete a priori' (1989, 143, 141): an a priori whose objectivity is nonabsolute, human-dependent. This is not the demise of objectivity, but of an absolute objectivity. Conway cogently summarizes the later Wittgenstein's position regarding the foundations of thought:

> One could argue that Wittgenstein's position allows for an objectivism rather than an absolutism or an extreme relativism. Absolutism posits absolute, fixed, permanent, unchanging standards, principles, and concepts *sub specie aeternitatis*; whereas objectivism allows for objective principles of judgment, standards, and concepts that are not decided by personal preference or the whim of individuals. One can be and is trained in particular patterns because we do share common interests, orientations, feelings, responses, and so on. Such necessity is conditional, for its source is existing human and natural conditions rather than invariant forms of reality or transcendental consciousness …
>
> Wittgenstein's investigations dispel traditional conceptions of unchanging, necessarily isomorphic structures of thought, language, and reality. The foundation is no longer sought in some objective, invariant, independent reality or structure of consciousness, but in a dialectical interaction of persons, their language and thought, and the world in which they dwell. Whereas previous accounts sought a foundation in either an independent objective realm *or* an independent subjective structure, herein the foundation lies in a dialectical transaction. Human variation is restricted within the limits of a form of life, a genetic, biological, psychological constitution developing within a cultural and natural world. There are parameters of development, limits to possible changes in the forms of human life. Our conceptual networks, our world pictures are part of our human histories. Such considerations do not introduce the confusion that Frege so feared. (1989, 143–4)

What Wittgenstein's position brings us to envisage is an *objectivism without absolutism*, a non-Kantian objectivity: 'One must envision the a priori as arising in experience rather than being imposed upon experience' (1989, 141). Logical necessity is not thereby lost, it is *conditional*, on our form of life. Barry Stroud agrees:

> Logical necessity, he [Wittgenstein] says, is not like rails that stretch to infinity and compel us to go in one and only one way. But neither is it the case that we are not compelled at all. Rather, they are the rails we have already travelled, and we can extend them beyond the present point

> only by depending on those that already exist. In order for the rails to be navigable they must be extended in smooth and natural ways; how they are to be continued is to that extent determined by the route of those rails which are already there. I have been primarily concerned to explain the sense in which we are 'responsible' for the ways in which the rails are extended, without destroying anything that could properly be called their objectivity. (Stroud 1965, 496)

Our foundations *are* related to our biological form of life and to our practices, though not *rationally*. We *do* think and act within an *objective* framework, a framework which is neither shakily poised on empirical possibility, nor imperiously compelled by a logical necessity whose rails stretch to infinity, having started we know not where. Our framework is a blend of realism and rule, of contingency and necessity. Unlike Kant's and Nagel's perspectiveless objectivity – a view from nowhere – ours is a view from somewhere. It is not thereby less, but *more* compelling. For a view from nowhere is no view at all. 'A view from nowhere' is an oxymoron.

Rather than allow for a specifically human parameter in the circumscription of our bounds of sense, philosophers have balked at anything that seems remotely associated with our human form of life as merely contingent. Our hinges are specifically human, and yet they are *objective*, indeed *logical*, bounds of sense.

Logical necessity: a toehold, not a skyhook

> … we should not look for skyhooks, but only for toeholds.
> Richard Rorty 1991, *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth*

Wittgenstein's fundamental superiority over many philosophers – and indeed this virtue constitutes one of his most valued legacies to the *method* of philosophy – is his starting philosophical enquiry by *looking, not thinking* (PI 66) – by looking at how we live our lives and how we use language, and how the two are linked. And yet being a philosopher, Wittgenstein, did not look to see our life, but our *form* of life; not the content of our thought, but the form of our thought; not phenomena, but the *possibilities of phenomena*:

> We feel as if we had to *penetrate* phenomena: our investigation, however, is directed not toward phenomena, but, as one might say, towards the '*possibilities*' of phenomena. We remind ourselves, that is to say, of the *kind of statement* that we make about phenomena. … Our investigation is therefore a grammatical one. (PI 90)

Wittgenstein is concerned with *possibilities* – that is, with the *kind of statement* we make about human phenomena.[12] When his thought experiments transcend these, it is not in order to import 'possibilities' from a nonhuman, otherworldly realm and impose them on us as earthly or human possibilities, but so as to cast heuristic, imaginative glances which result in a

sharpening of our perception of human grammar. Wittgenstein does not seek the *possibilities of phenomena* other than in ordinary life:

> The philosophy of logic speaks of sentences and words in exactly the sense in which we speak of them in ordinary life …
>
> We are talking about the spatial and temporal phenomenon of language, not about some non-spatial, non-temporal phantasm. (PI 108)

Grammatical rules imply necessity and objectivity, not absolutism. They are necessary within our form of life, not *überhaupt*. Logic or grammar, 'the *essence* of language, of propositions, of thought' is 'something that already lies open to view' (PI 92). We can view it in our use, in our practice, and so it has obvious and necessary links with our life. Logic is not *absolutely* regulative, that is, not regulative *in any possible world*, but regulative in ours: it expresses what we treat as *necessary* in our *contingent* world. The insulation of logic from experience was one of the mistakes perpetrated by traditional philosophy:

> Thought is surrounded by a halo. – Its essence, logic, presents an order, in fact the a priori order of the world: that is, the order of *possibilities*, which must be common to both world and thought. But this order, it seems, must be *utterly simple*. It is *prior* to all experience, must run through all experience; no empirical cloudiness or uncertainty can be allowed to affect it – It must rather be of the purest crystal. (PI 97)

Traditional philosophy, including the *Tractatus*, begins with a *requirement* of crystalline purity. The crystalline purity of logic is not a *result* of investigation, but a *requirement* which we impose on investigation, and which thereby does not stand in danger of being refuted. Irrefutable by decree, imposed upon experience and not emanating from experience, this makes it an *empty* requirement, causing no friction at all. Wittgenstein insists on the meaningful contribution of friction, urges that the link be made with experience, with our use of language:

> The more narrowly we examine actual language, the sharper becomes the conflict between it and our requirement. (For the crystalline purity of logic was, of course, not a *result of investigation*: it was a requirement.) The conflict becomes intolerable; the requirement is now in danger of becoming empty. – We have got on to slippery ice where there is no friction and so in a sense the conditions are ideal, but also, just because of that, we are unable to walk. We want to walk: so we need *friction*. Back to the rough ground! (PI 107)

Allowing for the friction of the *anthropological* does not result in a less rigorous logic, but in one which would be the *result* rather than the

preconception of observation:

> We see that what we call 'sentence' and 'language' has not the formal unity that I imagined, but is the family of structures more or less related to one another. – But what becomes of logic now? Its rigour seems to be giving way here. – But in that case doesn't logic altogether disappear? – For how can it lose its rigour? Of course not by our bargaining any of its rigour out of it. – The *preconceived idea* of crystalline purity can only be removed by turning our whole examination round. (One might say: the axis of reference of our examination must be rotated, but about the fixed point of our real need.) (PI 108)

His recognition that logic must be a genuine *result* of investigation – must have this proximity to our human ways of acting, speaking, thinking – or be empty, led Wittgenstein to rotate the axis of reference of philosophical examination. I take this to be one of the greatest steps in his own philosophizing and in the history of philosophy: the refusal to do philosophy in terms of *speculation*, of the *überhaupt* thinkable:

> The basic form of the game must be one in which we act. Isn't the real point this: we can't start with *philosophical speculation*? – The essence of the language game is a practical method (a way of acting) – not speculation, not chatter. (CE 397–9)

Compare Husserl:

> The world is not doubtful in the sense that there are rational grounds which might be pitted against the tremendous force of unanimous experiences, but in the sense that a doubt is *thinkable* … (1913, 145)

For Wittgenstein then, 'our *regular* ways of acting'[13] are not only the ungrounded foundation of all knowledge, they are also the starting point of philosophical analysis. Rather than start from philosophical speculation, Wittgenstein's anthropocentric view of mathematics, logic, grammar, allowed him to look for the necessary in what is already in full view; that is, in our contingent, but regular ways of acting. And it befits this 'realistic' picture that our rules of grammar should so *resemble* empirical propositions. In the next chapter, I examine *On Certainty*'s rebuttal of scepticism. A rebuttal linked precisely to the realization that our logic is human-bound.

8
Objective Certainty versus Scepticism

The rejection of obsessive doubt

> What I need to shew is that a doubt is not necessary even when it is possible. That the possibility of a language-game doesn't depend on everything being doubted that can be doubted.
>
> (OC 392)

A sceptic about *x* believes there is no knowledge about *x*. In *that* (simple) sense of scepticism, Wittgenstein is a sceptic. He believes there is no knowledge about the existence of the external world, about the world being more than five minutes old; he also believes that, in normal circumstances, a person does not know that she has a body, or a hand, or a toothache. We can call this kind of scepticism, with which Wittgenstein agrees: *knowledge-scepticism*. More commonly, however, scepticism is the belief that doubt about *x* is always rational. *This* motivation, Wittgenstein rejects. In *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein is criticizing the idea that there is no knowledge because everything can be doubted. This chapter is about that kind of scepticism – the obsessive doubt kind of scepticism. We might refer to the kind of scepticism Wittgenstein is rejecting as: *doubt-scepticism*.

Biperspectivalism: Williams, *not* Wittgenstein

> It seems … that the Wittgensteinian way with the sceptic tends in the direction of Humean biperspectivalism.
>
> Michael Williams (1991, 26)

'When we are in a certain intellectual mood, writes Gilbert Ryle, we seem to find clashes between the things that scientists tell us about our furniture, clothes and limbs and the things that we tell about them' (1954, 68). This rift between the scientific world and the everyday world (what Ryle also calls 'the world of real life' or 'the world of common sense' (ibid.)), has also been felt between the world of philosophy and the everyday world. Ryle's words

could run thus: 'When we are in a certain intellectual mood, we seem to find clashes between the things that *philosophers* tell us about our furniture, clothes and limbs and the things that we tell about them.' Hume is the most notable diagnostician of this rift – which Michael Williams calls *biperspectivalism*:

> The central *motif* in Hume's vision remains that of an irreconcilable clash between two outlooks or perspectives: the outlook we naturally assume in common life, which involves no deep systematic doubts about the reliability of our data, the reasonableness of our inferences, or the objectivity of our judgments, and the outlook to which we are inevitably led when we step back and reflect on everyday practices and procedures, which is total scepticism, a complete inability to see everyday certainties, inferences and judgments as deserving anything remotely like the status we otherwise effortlessly attribute to them. (1991, 8)

Although Williams does not accept this biperspectivalism as the final verdict on our epistemic situation, he does think that, with it, Hume grasped something of great significance: the *extreme context sensitivity* of sceptical doubt (1991, xix). Hume's insight is that although sceptical arguments can often strike us as irrefutable, the conviction they command is not easily detached from the special context of philosophical reflection (Williams 1991, xix). Indeed, for Williams, scepticism *cannot* survive outside the particular context of philosophical reflection; it evaporates in the pragmatic air of our ordinary certainties. The sceptic's problem is that he radicalizes his professional doubt: he thinks that because doubt is possible under the conditions of philosophical reflection, it is possible under any condition. The sceptic, on Williams's view, wrongly identifies the *instability* of knowledge with its *impossibility* (1991, xxii).

Williams attempts to rally Wittgenstein to this account of the sceptical situation. I believe, however, that both philosophers' accounts are irreconcilable. Williams takes scepticism seriously; Wittgenstein does not. Williams believes the sceptic's doubt is real and profound;[1] Wittgenstein does not. Williams believes that the sceptic's sin is that he generalizes what should remain a context-bound doubt; Wittgenstein believes so-called sceptical doubt is not doubt at all – *in* the study, or out.

On Williams's view, our bedrock certainties are not *substantively* or *intrinsically* foundational – that is, they are not foundational regardless of context. There are some contexts in which they are legitimately susceptible of doubt, and those are *philosophical* contexts. So that whereas our basic beliefs enjoy default justification status in our ordinary lives, we are entitled to examine them epistemically, and question them, in philosophical reflection. In other words, their not being subjected to enquiry or doubt in ordinary contexts is not a *conceptual*, but a *practical* feature of basic beliefs. In our *philosophical*

consideration of them, these beliefs are no longer in their *ordinary* epistemic situation, and are not therefore subjected to the same practical constraints. So that an alternative which would not count as a relevant alternative to these beliefs in ordinary circumstances, could count as a relevant alternative in the context of philosophical reflection. Descartes's demon and dream scenarios would be absurd or irrelevant alternatives outside the study, but *in* the study, they become plausible or relevant alternatives.

Wittgenstein's reply to Williams would be that *basic* certainty is not in the business of entertaining alternatives at all, whether in an ordinary context or in the context of philosophical reflection. Considering alternatives is an epistemic business, and hinge certainty is not an epistemic certainty. The 'possibilities' that we may always be dreaming, or that a demon may be inserting thoughts into our brains or that physical objects do not exist *cannot* be relevant alternatives to our hinge certainty *in any context*. Of course, to say that hinge certainty cannot be the *product* of the consideration of alternatives is not to say that it cannot be the *object* of philosophical consideration. Philosophy can and does reflect on hinge certainty. *On Certainty* and the present discussion (at least) attest to this. But there is a difference between intellectual consideration (or, indeed, *putting in question* the validity of a philosophical concept, such as, say, hinge certainty), and *actually doubting* (say, a hinge certainty). When Wittgenstein *considers, or even questions*, the indubitability of hinge certainty: 'Now do I, in the course of my life, make sure I know that here is a hand – my own hand, that is?' (OC 8) – he is not actually doubting 'Here is a hand'. This confusion between epistemic *reflection* and epistemic *doubt* (or, we might say, between *heuristic doubt* and real doubt) was precisely the confusion which Moore, and indeed Descartes, fell prey to. They conflated the mere consideration (or imagination) of doubt with doubt itself. We shall come back to Wittgenstein's more detailed response to this confusion.

Williams is perfectly aware of the response that, on Wittgenstein's view, our basic beliefs are nonepistemic, and therefore not susceptible of doubt in any context. He does not, however, believe this to be Wittgenstein's response, but that of philosophers who share what he calls 'the Framework Reading' of *On Certainty*.[2] So that Williams sees Wittgenstein as not only *accepting* the particularity of philosophical doubt – indeed, as wanting to 'alert us to the peculiar and problematic character of philosophical doubt' (Forthcoming) – but also as aiming to show us that this special kind of doubt does not affect our ordinary epistemic practices. Williams says that Wittgenstein wants to do this, not in order to *refute* scepticism, but only to underline its difference from ordinary doubting:

> Revealing how different sceptical doubt is from ordinary doubt may not refute the sceptic but it can and should shake our casual confidence that we understand him. (Forthcoming)

and in order to examine how philosophical doubt operates:

> [Wittgenstein's] intent is clear: the peculiar character of philosophical doubt is not a refutation of scepticism, but it is an invitation to pursue a diagnostic inquiry. If a doubt about existence only works in a language-game, and if the game of philosophical reflection is distinct from that of ordinary doubting, we are entitled to ask how the philosophical game is to be carried on. (Forthcoming)

So that, on Williams's reading of Wittgenstein, although sceptical doubt has no bearing on ordinary doubt, it *is* a legitimate manifestation of doubt, and we are entitled to its examination.

In the passages he is examining,[3] Williams takes Wittgenstein to identify 'the absolutely crucial feature of philosophical doubt' as involving 'taking seriously the possibility that no physical objects exist' (Forthcoming). The reason the sceptic and the idealist take the 'possibility' seriously is that, to them, 'External objects exist' is an empirical proposition.[4] We need not delve further into Williams's discussion; for our purposes, a summary of his conclusion will do: Wittgenstein's 'refutation of idealism' consists in acknowledging the legitimacy of sceptical doubt in philosophical contexts, whilst pointing out the danger of extending the sceptic's epistemic norms – in effect, a mistaken, though enticing epistemological realism – to our ordinary practices:

> Epistemological realism, the idea of an immutable order of reasons, is scepticism's ultimate source; and the pragmatic conception of norms, implicit in the idea of meaning as use, shows how we can refuse to accede to it. (Forthcoming)

Williams sees Wittgenstein as prompting us to break with the sceptic's epistemic realism and adopt a pragmatic conception of norms, one which views our normative structure of doubting and justifying as subject to change; that is, as context-sensitive.

I will not here go into a detailed refutation of Williams's attempt to rally Wittgenstein to his own position. It will suffice to show that the basic assumption which allows Williams to think he is entitled to do this is untenable: *contra* Williams, Wittgenstein does *not* believe that there is a difference between philosophical and ordinary doubt, or that sceptical doubt is legitimate at all. This assumption is due to a misreading of Wittgenstein. On Williams's view, the default justification of our basic beliefs is due to practical considerations, but we are committed to active justification in the face of a reasonable challenge to our epistemic responsibility or to the adequacy of one's grounds:[5] claims that cannot be adequately defended, must be modified or withdrawn (1999b, 189). In the context of philosophical

reflection, however, where practical considerations are suspended, all doubts become relevant, even those concerning our basic beliefs:

> … [Moorean judgments] are not *ordinarily* treated as supportable by evidence or open to question. However – and Wittgenstein is well aware of this reply – our indulgent attitude is merely a reflection of practical exigencies. We have to take lots of things for granted if we are to get on with life. But in the context of philosophical reflection, where practical considerations are set aside, we can put ourselves into an epistemic relation with the most banal everyday certainties. Indeed we can come to appreciate that we always stand in such a relation, even though for practical purposes we may ignore the epistemic demands that this relation imposes. (Forthcoming)

Wittgenstein is utterly opposed to this view. For him, as was seen in Chapter 4, not only are our basic beliefs not justified at all (their default stability is not due to justification of any kind), but this is a *conceptual*, not a practical feature, of basic beliefs (and cannot therefore be context-sensitive). We shall see in the next section that it is not a *hinge* that can be doubted in some contexts and not in others; but that a hinge can *never* be doubted whereas the *doppelgänger* of a hinge can, and this misleads the sceptic into thinking he is doubting the hinge itself.[6] So that Williams is wrong to assume that Wittgenstein sees the ungroundedness of basic beliefs as due to our 'indulgent attitude'. This misgiving may be due to Wittgenstein's sometimes misleading use of terms like 'assumption', as in the following passage:

> If I say 'we *assume* that the earth has existed for many years past' (or something similar), then of course it sounds strange that we should *assume* such a thing. But in the entire system of our language-games it belongs to our foundations. The assumption [*Annahme*], one might say, forms the basis of action, and therefore, naturally, of thought. (OC 411)

But here again (as for 'know'), Wittgenstein's use of the terms 'assumption' and 'assume' is investigative, not straightforward – as indicated by the sentence in inverted commas, the italics and the qualifying expression: 'one might say'. Elsewhere, however, Wittgenstein's use of the term is direct, and here there is no equivocality:

> But it *isn't* that the situation is like this: We just *can't* investigate everything, and for that reason we are forced to rest content with assumption. (OC 343; first emphasis mine)

It *isn't*, then, that in ordinary circumstances, we do not doubt that we have a body because we are otherwise (practically) engaged. Wittgenstein insists

that he does not want to regard this certainty as 'something akin to hastiness or superficiality' (OC 358). There is, on his view, no alternative to the groundlessness of our basic beliefs – it is a *conceptual*, not a *contextual* groundlessness. So that Wittgenstein cannot be saying that the sceptic is engaged in the legitimate doubting of what we ordinarily do not doubt, for according to him, the sceptic cannot be engaging in doubt at all – our bedrock certainties are not susceptible of doubt. The sceptic is, therefore, under an *illusion of doubt* (OC 19). It is not, then, that sceptical doubts are *unnatural doubts* (1991, 2), and hence unliveable outside the unnatural conditions of philosophical reflection, but that they are *artificial*, as in: *not real*; not doubts at all, but a mere simulacrum of doubt. For Wittgenstein, philosophical scepticism is in fact only *doubt-behaviour*.

Indeed, in *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein discredits some formulations of doubt, referring to them as *doubt-behaviour* (OC 255). He does not mean by this that the doubt in question is spurious or deceitful, only that it is not real doubt – it is not what we mean by doubt. We doubt when we have *reason* to doubt, not because we are *at leisure* to doubt: 'The question is this: how is doubt introduced into the language-game? One doubts on specific grounds' (OC 458). Moreover, the philosophical sceptic's doubt purports to be *obsessive* or *radical*: from the fact that we *sometimes* have reason to doubt, he concludes that we are *always* entitled to doubt. It is, again, precisely in this that the sceptic's doubt is not real doubt: 'A doubt that doubted everything would not be a doubt' (OC 450); 'If you tried to doubt everything you would not get as far as doubting anything. The game of doubting itself presupposes certainty' (OC 115). There is here, then, the implication that the sceptic is in the grips of a *category mistake*: he is putting something in the category of doubt which does not belong there. For Wittgenstein, the sceptical problem does not reside in a clash between irrefutability and unliveability, but in a category mistake.

According to Wittgenstein, the sceptic is making two grave mistakes – and these are connected. One, we have just seen, is that he is mistaking the behaviour of doubt for genuine doubt; and the other is that he is mistaking hinges for propositions (either empirical or epistemic). It will be in terms of the latter category mistake that I will formulate one of *On Certainty*'s fatal blows against external world scepticism. Another of these blows, I will trace along the lines of what I shall call Wittgenstein's *Logical Pragmatism*. Wittgenstein's depiction of the nature of our basic beliefs, as *logical* (grammatical), necessarily *ineffable*, and *enacted*[7] makes the sceptic's mere *mouthing of doubt* (doubt-behaviour) impotent to unsettle a certainty whose salient conceptual feature is that it is *lived*. Let us begin with the category mistake which consists in the confusion of a hinge with a proposition (be it empirical, epistemic or fictional), keeping in mind that in the rest of this chapter, I will be taking Wittgenstein's insights in *On Certainty* about scepticism and certainty to their logical conclusion. That is, I will formulate the

implications and conclusions these insights invite or entail, but which Wittgenstein does not explicitly spell out.

The *third* Wittgenstein and the category mistake of philosophical scepticism[8]

> … we engage in empirical discourse when empirical discourse is not called for.
>
> Frank Cioffi 1998, 'Explanation, self-clarification and solace'

Wittgenstein's stance against scepticism is usually seen in terms of an unsatisfactory 'neutralisation' or 'dissolution' of the problem; as what Michael Williams calls a *therapeutic diagnostic* treatment, one which treats scepticism as a *pseudoproblem* generated by misuses or misunderstandings of language (1999a, 49). On that view, as Williams writes:

> No proof is possible because there is nothing to prove. This means that a response to scepticism cannot be dialectical: that is, it cannot take the form showing that the sceptic is wrong, proving what he doubts. (Forthcoming)

The best that can be done then is to 'identify the conceptual misunderstanding that gives rise to the illusion of sceptical doubt; and … explain why the sceptic fails to see the illusion for what it is' (ibid.). Indeed, this is precisely what Wittgenstein does in *On Certainty*: he dissolves the problem of doubt-scepticism, by identifying the conceptual misunderstanding – the category mistake – that gives rise to it, *and* he explains why this category mistake is (so easily) made. Wittgenstein shows the falsity of the basic assumption of external world scepticism – that our foundational certainty is *based on* the senses – thereby rebutting[9] scepticism; but he moreover enables us to understand what made us accept this assumption in the first place, thereby loosening scepticism's *grip* on philosophy.

The *third* Wittgenstein: a further extension of grammar

> Here, it could now be asked what I really want, to what extent I want to deal with grammar.
>
> (RC III, 309)

> … it is not a contingent proposition that *there is an external world.*
>
> (von Wright 1972, 174)

Because of what is generally, though not unanimously, recognized as his recantation of the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein's work has found a natural division into what commentators have called the 'first' and the 'second Wittgenstein' – the latter referring to the entire post-*Tractatus* corpus crowned by *Philosophical Investigations*. This binary conception of

Wittgenstein's work thus fails to reflect the distinctive importance of *On Certainty*, and I have elsewhere suggested that we distinguish a post-*Investigations*, a *third* Wittgenstein, from the indiscriminate assemblage of what is referred to as the *second* or the *later* Wittgenstein.[10] I believe that *On Certainty* should be recognized as one of Wittgenstein's *three* great works – if only because it gives us the key to one of philosophy's most intractable problems: the problem of scepticism about the external world.[11]

The *second* Wittgenstein found that what we took to be empirical propositions describing *necessary* truths (e.g. '*Nothing can be both red and green all over at the same time*') are really expressions of rules of grammar (BB 54–7; PG, pp. 127–9; AWL 16). As Baker and Hacker have made abundantly clear, such sentences, that look like *super-empirical* or *super-physical* descriptions of reality which formulate *metaphysical* necessities, were recognized by Wittgenstein to be in fact nothing but norms of representation constituting our bounds of *sense*.[12] These masqueraders uncovered by the second Wittgenstein are what I have classified as *linguistic hinges* (see taxonomy of hinges: section, 'A taxonomy of hinges, in Chapter 5). The *third* Wittgenstein, I suggest, comes to see that our grammar is more extensive than he had previously thought:[13] 'Here, he writes, it could now be asked what I really want, to what extent I want to deal with grammar' (RC III, 309). The question is loaded, for the turf covered by grammar had never before seemed to him so similar to the ground covered by the empirical: 'There are countless general empirical propositions that count as certain for us' (OC 273). In *On Certainty*, he comes to see that these 'general empirical propositions' are not empirical propositions at all, but rules of grammar. The difference between *these* masqueraders and those uncovered by the *second* Wittgenstein is that, unlike their precursors, these do not purport to be *necessary*, but rather to be *contingent* truths (e.g. '*There are external objects*', '*Here is a hand*', '*The earth is a body on whose surface we move*', '*I am now sitting in a chair*').[14] Nothing *meta*physical here, these usurpers resemble *physical* statements ('the statements in question are statements about material objects' (OC 402)); or indeed, *factual* statements (e.g. 'The world has existed for many years past' (OC 411)), and yet their putative negation would be as *grammatically* nonsensical as: '$2 + 2 \neq 4$':

> I want to say: The *physical* game is just as certain as the arithmetical. … If one doesn't marvel at the fact that the propositions of arithmetic (e.g. the multiplication tables) are 'absolutely certain', then why should one be astonished that the proposition 'This is my hand' is so equally? (OC 447–8; my emphasis)

One should *not* be astonished. Indeed:

> … one might grant that Moore was right, if he is interpreted like this: a proposition saying that here is a physical object may have the same logical status as one saying that here is a red patch. (OC 52)

What *have the form of* or *look like empirical* propositions in fact function as *grammatical rules* or *hinges*

the *second* Wittgenstein	**the *third* Wittgenstein**
some sentences that *have the form of* (resemble) *super-empirical* or *super-physical* (metaphysical) or *necessary truths*	some sentences that *have the form of* (resemble) *physical* or *contingent truths*
=***linguistic hinges*** e.g. 'Red is darker than pink', 'A patch cannot be both red and green at the same time'	=***nonlinguistic hinges***, that is: **personal hinges:** e.g. 'I am here, sitting by the fire, wearing a winter dressing gown' **local hinges:** e.g. 'The earth is round' **universal hinges:** e.g. 'There exist other people such as myself'

Chart 8.1 The *third* Wittgenstein

The first set of hinges listed in Chapter 4 – *linguistic hinges* – includes the masqueraders uncovered by the *second* Wittgenstein; the other three sets, which I have dubbed *nonlinguistic hinges*, are a recategorization due to the *third* Wittgenstein as seen in Chart 8.1.

The unquestioned assumption of external world scepticism, is that *our foundational certainty is an empirical conclusion*; that it is based on the *evidence* of the senses.[15] The *third* Wittgenstein prompts us to see that what Descartes and Moore took to be empirical propositions in fact have a grammatical status – that some *experiential* statements are not *empirical* statements. That is, our certainty about some of the things we *experience* is not *derived* from our senses; indeed, as we have seen in the section, 'Personal hinges' in Chapter 6, it is not derived at all. Inasmuch, then, as Descartes's scepticism has the unreliability or the relativity of the senses as its starting point,[16] if our most fundamental certainties are not *grounded* on the senses, Descartes has no argument. And inasmuch as the existence of external objects is not an empirical (or an epistemic) conclusion, but a grammatical starting point, Moore's *proof* is itself a category mistake. There is no *possibility* of error or deception here, and therefore no meaningful scepticism. This marks the collapse of the sceptical assumption. And yet any satisfying resolution of scepticism must also accurately account for the *force* of scepticism, explain why we have the impression that it raises a real doubt. Why, then, does the impression subsist that a real doubt was raised?

The *doppelgänger*, again

In *Remarks on Colour*, which is contemporaneous with *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein asks: 'Where do we draw the line between logic and experience?' (RC III, 4). He replies that what category a string of words

belongs to is determined only by use:

> If we say that the proposition 'saturated yellow is lighter than saturated blue' doesn't belong to the realm of psychology (for only *so* could it be natural history) – this means that we are not *using* it as a proposition of natural history. And the question then is: what is the other, non-temporal *use* like? (RC III, 9)
>
> For this [determining the *use*] is the only way we can distinguish propositions of 'the mathematics of colour' from those of natural history. (RC III, 10)

The only criterion is *use*. The same string of words can be used in one context as an empirical proposition, in another as a grammatical rule:

> And don't I have to admit that sentences are often used on the borderline between logic and the empirical, so that their meaning shifts back and forth and they are *now* expressions of norms, *now* treated as expressions of experience?
>
> For it is not the 'thought' (an accompanying mental phenomenon) but its *use* (something that surrounds it), that distinguishes the logical proposition from the empirical one. (RC III, 19; my emphasis)

The appearance or 'form' of some sentences does not reveal their use, and so should not presume on their status. Different uses, different statuses. What has *the form of* an empirical proposition may or may not be *used* as one:

> … The *form* of the propositions in both [just described] language-games *is the same*: 'X is lighter than Y'. But in the first it is an external relation and the proposition is temporal, in the second it is an internal relation and the proposition is timeless. (RC I, 1; my emphasis)
>
> … here, language-games decide. (RC I, 6)

Language-*games* decide. That is: use (context, circumstances), not form.

Hinges give the impression they are empirical because they seem to be conclusions drawn about material objects, facts or events: 'Here is a hand', 'There are other people such as myself', 'External objects exist'. This *mention* of the empirical world gives the impression that we have here to do with a *description* of it, and therefore, that verification and falsification are legitimate. After all, I can look out the window to make sure there are other people in the world or stretch out my hand and touch an external object. But, as was shown in the section, 'Personal hinges' in Chapter 6, this is not

checking. If it is done in earnest, it is madness. Or philosophical confusion: treating a norm of expression as if it were an expression of experience. When Moore asserts: 'Here is a hand', he assumes that he is appeasing a doubt; that there had been uncertainty there which needed allaying; that the question 'Is this a hand?' posed by someone looking at his hand in normal circumstances has a sense. But it does not. It has as much sense as 'Has this room a length?' In some cases, what appears to have an empirical status has nothing but a regulative status. And here of course, there can be no checking.

Though they may *look like* empirical propositions whose validity we can verify – that is, they *seem* to describe the empirical world or, they are composed of the same words that may *in another use* constitute an empirical proposition – Moore-type sentences have no truth-conditions. They play a 'logical role' (OC 136): they are grammatical rules (OC 57–9). It is *use* that determines *status*, but the danger here is that the identical *appearance* of the sentence in each use makes it look as if we are dealing with a single *status* – that status usually being that of the proposition, or falsifiable description – and because in *that* use, we can effect a successful negation, we transfer the possibility of successful negation to all uses. This is what allows the sceptic to believe she is negating our certainty, when all she is doing is unwittingly and inconsequentially negating an empirical or fictional *doppelgänger* of that certainty. Philosophical scepticism turns out to be the misguided product of a category mistake.

To mistake the expression of a rule for a proposition is to make a category mistake, one that leads the philosopher to affirm inconclusiveness or scepticism where she should have recognized grammatical necessity. Because philosophers mistake strings of words such as: 'There are physical objects' or 'The world exists' for empirical propositions, they believe they can meaningfully doubt them, and hence embark on elaborate metaphysical investigations to uncover some hidden proof, where they should have recognized the track laid down by ourselves.

Hinges and their *doppelgänger*

The thing about the grammatical rules uncovered by the *second* Wittgenstein – those I have dubbed *linguistic* hinges – is that we cannot conceive of their negation. Their negation, he writes, is 'impossible', 'unimaginable', 'unthinkable' (MWL 60). We cannot attempt to describe or imagine *'Red is lighter than pink' or 'This rod has no length'*. '[H]ere, notes Wittgenstein, "I can't imagine" doesn't indicate a lack of imaginative power. I can't even *try* to imagine it; it makes no sense to say "I imagine it" ' (PG, p. 129).[17] We *can*, however, conceive or imagine the negation of such strings of words as: 'I am at present in a room' or 'These are my hands'. And the reason *these* rules of grammar *seem* to be readily open to negation is that they have propositional *doppelgänger* which – by dint of being propositional, that is, descriptive – *are* susceptible of negation. Our foundational certainty

is not up for grabs by the sceptic because it is not an empirical candidate at all. The reason the sceptic mistakes it for one is that it has *propositional doppelgänger* that *are* up for grabs. The sceptic believes she is raising a real doubt because she is confusing a grammatical rule with an empirical proposition. And that confusion is compounded by the fact that both the empirical proposition and the grammatical rule are expressed by an identical sentence. As in the following example:

> I know that a sick man is lying here? Nonsense! I am sitting at his bedside, I am looking attentively into his face. – So I don't know, then, that there is a sick man lying here? Neither the question nor the assertion makes sense. Any more than the assertion 'I am here', which I might yet use at any moment, if suitable occasion presented itself. … And 'I know that there's a sick man lying here', used in an *unsuitable* situation, seems not to be nonsense but rather seems matter-of-course, only because one can fairly easily imagine a situation to fit it, and one thinks that the words 'I know that …' are always in place where there is no doubt, and hence even where the expression of doubt would be unintelligible. (OC 10)

Because one can imagine a suitable situation in which a sentence might be used, one wrongly believes that the sentence is meaningful in any situation. There are then *suitable* situations for doubt, and for the articulation of certainty, and *unsuitable* ones; but we take the suitable ones as default; we believe that because in some situations we can doubt, we can doubt in any: this is rightly called *obsessive* doubt.[18] I now give examples of propositional *doppelgänger* (be they empirical, factual or fictional) for each nonlinguistic hinge category.

The doppelgänger *of personal hinges*

Although in normal circumstances, 'I have two hands' constitutes a hinge,[19] there are situations where it constitutes an empirical proposition: for example, having just been operated, I remove the coverings and bandages to make sure my hands have not been amputated (see OC 23), and *find out* that I do, indeed, have two hands. Similarly, although in normal, unqualified, circumstances: 'I am at present in a room, not in the open air' functions as an unquestioned hinge, there are nonordinary circumstances where I can meaningfully be said to *inquire and find out from my senses* that 'I am at present in a room, not in the open air …'. If I were blindfolded and taken from a garden into a house and asked to guess where I was, I would assess *from my senses* that I had been taken indoors – that I was 'at present … in a room and not in the open air'. And *that* would be an empirical proposition: a pronouncement due to the evidence of my senses.

The doppelgänger *of local hinges*

As we saw in Chapter 7, many of our local hinges have empirical *doppelgänger* – 'Man can walk on the moon' is a sentence that for many of

us today functions as a rule of grammar, but at one time, functioned as an empirical proposition. Many such examples can be summoned to show that the same sentence can function as a local hinge in one context and, in another context, as an empirical proposition: at one time, 'Men biologically contribute to the creation of a child' was an empirical proposition; today, for most of humanity, it constitutes a hinge. With cloning, that hinge will be ousted from some local bedrocks (cf. section, 'Replacing the transformational metaphor: the *doppelgänger*' in Chapter 7).

The doppelgänger *of universal hinges*

For some sentences, Wittgenstein can think of no use other than a logical one; that is, no *context* of use. So that when Wittgenstein writes: 'I do not know how the sentence "I have a body" is to be used. / That doesn't unconditionally apply to the proposition that I have always been on or near the surface of the earth' (OC 258) – he is saying that although he can find contexts (make up a story) wherein the sentence 'I have always been on or near the surface of the earth' would make sense (i.e. be used as a description or an informative proposition) in the flow of a language-game (and he does at OC 106); he cannot imagine any context where 'I have a body' could be used as an informative or empirical proposition. Indeed, in what circumstances could I be said to find out *from the evidence of my senses* that 'I have a body'? Perhaps in the extreme case of my losing both proprioception and eyesight, and then recovering one or both. But we need not resort to such extreme cases to find propositional *doppelgänger* for *universal* hinges: they are readily available in the form of fictional propositions. In *fictional* contexts, individuals can be imagined who, like 'The Invisible Man' in the defunct television series, have *no* body. The Invisible Man could drink a potion which would give him a body; and he would then exclaim, in empirical amazement: 'I have a body!'. Similarly:

> (Indeed, I do not know what 'I know that I am a human being' means. But even that might be given a sense.)
>
> For each one of these [Moore-type] sentences I can imagine circumstances that turn it into a move in one of our language-games, and by that it loses everything that is philosophically astonishing. (OC 622)

Indeed, we can *imagine* circumstances where that sentence would make sense: say, a fictional situation in which Martians and Earthlings cohabited a planet, but there was no telltale way of distinguishing their provenance and they were themselves unaware of it. An individual would have to consult the planet's archives to find out her origin. So that upon being asked if she knew what species she belonged to, an Earthling would reply: 'I know that I am a human being (I've consulted the archives)'. There *are* contexts then, for the most part: *fictional* contexts, where the *doppelgänger* of a *universal* hinge constitutes a falsifiable proposition.[20] But the negation of

a fictional proposition does not entail the negation of any of its *doppelgänger*. 'I do not know whether I am a human being' pronounced in ordinary circumstances is nonsense. It is not nonsense when pronounced in a fictional context. The problem is that philosophers illegitimately transfer the meaningfulness inherent in the fictional situation to real-life situations.

Nonsense that *looks like* sense

> If the explanations do not give it a sense, this is as much nonsense as abracadabra. The only thing is that this nonsense is more *like* sense.
>
> Wittgenstein (LPP 115)

On a widely shared philosophical view – that which sees the Principle of (Non)-contradiction as the supreme legislator of logical possibility – the ability to conceive or imagine something is enough to make it a *logical* possibility. David Lewis, for one, takes 'the mere possibility' that a person might switch bodies as real or serious enough to require the modification of his counterpart theory (in 'Counterparts of Persons and Their Bodies' (1971, 47)). But how possible is it, in our world, that a person might switch bodies? *It is not possible*, though it *is* imaginable. That is equivalent to saying that it is not *physically* possible, though it is *logically* (in the broad sense[21]) possible. The problem, however, is that physical and logical possibilities are confused or conflated.

For the sentences: 'I can switch bodies' or 'Someone may be inserting thoughts into my brain' to make sense, a language-game or context of use which is not our everyday, ordinary context, must be introduced – say the language-game of fiction. And indeed, philosophers' thought-experiments *do* start with such stage-setting instructions, such as Descartes: '*I will suppose that* … some malicious demon etc' (1641, 15). The problem is that the pretence is then dropped without warning, as the conclusion drawn from the fictional situation is transferred to the real-life situation. Yet possibility, like meaning, is not something that sticks to sentences and gets automatically transferred from context to context. That we can understand a picture or a sentence as depicting a *fictionally* (or broadly logical) possible situation does not warrant it as depicting a *human* (or physical) possibility. The sentence 'I have a body' is a falsifiable proposition in a fictional context (e.g. a tale in which some of the fictional characters are said to have bodies, and others not); in our human world, it is a nonfalsifiable bound of sense. There is no *meaningful* description of my possibly not having a body *in this, our human world*. To *seriously* assert this as possible in our world is to have transgressed the bounds of sense into nonsense, indeed into madness.[22]

Descartes makes a category mistake when he produces the *fiction* of a perpetually deceptive evil genius to count as a meaningful or valid refutation of the human law of thought: 'We cannot be mistaken all the time'.

To introduce doubt in the form of a fictional proposition does nothing to unsettle a hinge. Where sceptics believe they are negating or destabilizing our certainty, they have not even addressed it. To say of a human being that someone else's thoughts may be inserted in their minds is *nonsense*; it is *not* nonsense to say it of a cartoon character. Here is yet another instance where our failing to discern masqueraders of sense has led us to centuries of nonsense, because – yes, '*this nonsense is more like sense*' (LPP 115). In other words, it *looks* more like sense; and all the more, because *in some contexts*, it *makes sense*.

With the *third* Wittgenstein, grammar finds itself much enlarged. Not a handful of logical principles or Kantian categories determine our universal bounds of sense, but a much greater number of grammatical rules. Extending our traditional laws of thought to include hinges ensures that our conception of what is logical does not lead to our having to envisage life-size absurdities as formal possibilities. Descartes was wrong to believe that in a nonfictional context, 'We cannot be mistaken all the time' is a proposition susceptible of negation. It is rather one of the untouchable bounds of sense upon which we, humans, are superbly and immovably hinged.[23]

Logic in action: Wittgenstein's *Logical Pragmatism* and the impotence of scepticism[24]

Wittgenstein's *Logical Pragmatism*

> So I am trying to say something that sounds like pragmatism. (OC 422)

We have seen (Chapter 3) that Wittgenstein's ultimate and crucial depiction of our basic beliefs is in terms of a *know-how*, an *attitude*, a *way of acting*. Here, he treads on pragmatist ground. But can Wittgenstein be labelled a pragmatist, having himself rejected the affiliation because of its utility implication?

> But you aren't a pragmatist? No. For I am not saying that a proposition is true if it is useful. (RPP I, 266)

Wittgenstein resists affiliation with pragmatism because he does not want *his* use of *use* to be confused with the *utility* use of *use*. For him, it is not that a proposition is true if it is useful, but that use gives the proposition its sense. Meaning is *use*; not *usefulness*. In fact, Wittgenstein's *use* has no internal connection to truth at all; it is *meaning*, not truth, that is internally linked to use. As to foundational beliefs, truth does not even apply to them (OC 205), but nor does Wittgenstein want to end up saying that a proposition is *certain* if it is useful. To see our foundational beliefs – our *objective certainty* on *grounds* of utility and success, would be to miss their logical nature.

In a paper entitled 'Pragmatics and pragmatisms', Robert Brandom draws a distinction between a broad and a narrow conception of pragmatism.

Broadly conceived, pragmatism is simply 'a movement centered on the primacy of the practical';[25] only in its narrow conception does it focus on the relation of belief to utility and success.[26] Jacques Bouveresse (1987) distinguishes a Jamesian brand of pragmatism, based on utility, from a Peircean brand which, strictly speaking, is a method of conceptual clarification or analysis, not concerned with the truth, justification or rationalization of our beliefs. Bouveresse places Wittgenstein in the Peircean line of pragmatism.[27]

Brandom's dichotomy and Bouveresse's distinction allow me to affiliate Wittgenstein to that family of philosophers who have stressed the primacy of acting, without unduly attributing to him strains in pragmatism which are foreign to his concerns. The later Wittgenstein is a pragmatist in the broad sense. His viewing meaning in terms of *use*, his insistence on the anthropological and logical primacy of the *deed* over the word ('In the beginning was the deed') and his re-evaluation of some of our words *as* deeds largely justify his affiliation to *broad pragmatism*. Jacques Bouveresse also speaks of Wittgenstein's 'pragmatism', and sees it as finding its ultimate expression in *On Certainty*:

> What is referred to as Wittgenstein's 'pragmatism' is in fact nothing but the conviction that our concepts of thought, arithmetic, deduction, etc. are determined by an agreement arrived at, not on the basis of incontestable experiential data (empiricism) or ultra-experiential data (platonism), or in accordance with our definitions (conventionalism), but on ways of acting and forms of life. It is in *On Certainty* that Wittgenstein draws the ultimate consequences of this observation. (1987, 589; my translation)

Wittgenstein is an unexceptional pragmatist in seeing belief, indeed our basic beliefs, in terms of an enacted know-how, but he adds a new strain to pragmatism: he sees that basic know-how is *logical* – and logical, *on no grounds*.[28] The know-how *is* the ground. Wittgenstein's pragmatism is then a pragmatism *with foundations*, but the enacted nature of these foundations makes them congenial to the spirit of pragmatism. Moreover, part of the foundation is mutable, which allows for a *pluralism* that pragmatism cannot do without; whilst the *immutable* component of the bedrock – that which is 'subject to no alteration' (OC 99) – is nevertheless *not* ideally or transcendentally fixed. The tendency, on the part of Neopragmatists and Therapeutes, to reject foundationalism is due to their equating 'foundations', 'immutable', 'fixed' or 'universal' with 'metaphysical', 'transcendent' or 'absolute'. Wittgenstein is a foundationalist, but this does not make him into a Platonist or an empirical foundationalist. And he has, what Therapeutes protest against his having: a *thick* notion of grammar[29] – so thick in fact that it includes, as we have seen, a *universal* grammar (though of course not in the chomskyan sense). The slide from foundations to

metaphysical or generative grammars need not be made. Making it has led to the astounding denial of Wittgenstein's glaring foundationalism[30] and to overlooking the possibility that with *On Certainty* foundationalism sheds its old skin. To say that some of our bounds of sense (or rules of grammar) are universal or immutable is not *ipso facto* to say that they express metaphysical truths, truths independent of the human condition, or known in advance of use. To say that some of our bounds of sense are universal or immutable can also be to say that for any human being to *think, speak* or *act*, genuinely, in a way which shows certain of our bounds of sense as not standing fast for her is equal to her having *lost sense*. Our foundations do not make up the sort of 'ahistorical metaphysical framework' dreaded by Rorty (1990a, 215); they are *anthropo*-logical. I will argue that this keeping the conceptual 'must' close to home, does not make it less 'hard'. We need not give up foundations altogether to acquire pluralism, and acknowledging pluralism need not leave us suspended in a Rortian universe of unrooted conversations and discourses. Wittgenstein's foundationalism is neither ahistorical, nor decontextualized: it is a *human-bound* foundationalism.

Wittgenstein's conclusion in *On Certainty* – I believe we *can* so qualify the upshot of the nonlinear progression of his thought (see Introduction) – is that our basic certainty is logical (or grammatical), logically ineffable and enacted. I will call this a *logical pragmatism*. *Logical pragmatism* is the view that our basic beliefs are a know-how, and that this know-how is *logical* – that it is *necessary* to our making sense. I give Wittgenstein's stance a name because I believe it is time Wittgenstein's thought earned more definition than it has received. Definition which would allow it to emerge from the nebulosity and distrust that have been generated by the refusal to attribute theses or substantial philosophical positions to him.[31]

Logic in action

> I want to regard man here as an animal; as a primitive being to which one grants instinct and ratiocination. As a creature in a primitive state. Any logic good enough for a primitive means of communication needs no apology from us. Language did not emerge from some kind of ratiocination.
>
> (OC 475)

In *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein comes to see our hinges as grammatical rules, as forming 'the foundation of all operating with thoughts' (OC 401), but he warns us against thinking of this grammar as 'a kind of *seeing*', 'it is our *acting* which lies at the bottom of the language-game' (OC 204). Our *objective certainty* is not a *coming-to-see* type of certainty; it is not of the order of knowing, justification, reason or reflection,[32] and is therefore immune to mistake, doubt or falsification – for where no epistemic route was followed, no epistemic fault is possible. It is a nonpropositional, ungrounded certainty

which manifests itself ineffably *in* what we say and do. To be certain, here, means to *be unwaveringly and yet thoughtlessly hinged* on something which *enables* us to think, speak or act meaningfully. That something is *grammar*. Our basic certainties are grammatical rules, manifesting themselves as a flawless know-how. The rules can be articulated into sentences, but such articulation is effected only for heuristic purposes, such as philosophical discussion or grammatical instruction. In the normal run of life, hinges are ineffable and enacted.

All hinges – whether natural or acquired – are *grammatical* in nature, but Wittgenstein also refers to them as *animal* in nature (OC 359). Grammatical *and* animal? How are these compatible? By 'animal', Wittgenstein means that the kind of certainty in question is a nonratiocinated certainty, a nonconceptual grasp, a *direct taking-hold*. This is the case whether the certainty be natural or conditioned. Grammar and instinct are then indeed compatible. Both evoke unpondered immediacy, absence of hesitation, automatism. In fact, this conceptual *resemblance* points to a conceptual *overlap*. Logic is seen by Wittgenstein as belonging to the realm of instinct *and* reason (see epigraph: OC 475), and this view is reinforced by allusions to certainty as a kind of primitive (or primal) *trust*.[33] Without this unflinching trust, there is no making sense: '… a language-game is only possible if one trusts something (I did not say "can trust something")' (OC 509). Trust, here, is not an option.[34] The traditional view of logical necessity as an inexorable *law* gives way, in the *Remarks on the Foundation of Mathematics*, to the view that there is an inexorable *attitude* in the face of what it makes sense to say or think. This attitude of inexorable *application* (RFM, p. 82) is glossed, in *On Certainty*, as one of nonratiocinated, immediate *trust*. In Wittgenstein's hands, logical necessity sheds its metaphysical, metahuman features, and becomes an *Einstellung*, an unhesitating attitude which manifests itself as a thoughtless grasp (OC 510). This is, as we saw in the section, '*Enacted*: hinges can manifest themselves only in action' in Chapter 4, logic *in action*:

> That is to say, it belongs to the logic of our scientific investigations that certain things are *in deed* [sic] not doubted. (OC 342)

The delusion of doubt

> If Moore were to pronounce the opposite of those propositions which he regards as certain, we should not just not share his opinion: we should regard him as demented.
>
> (OC 155)

Our *objective certainty* can *only* be enacted. And in the same way that our *adherence* to a rule of thought can only meaningfully manifest itself in our acting, so too, our *nonadherence*. A mere *verbal* rejection of a law of thought is not logically effective; it is an idle mouthing of words. The

sentence: 'We cannot doubt everything' articulates a human law of thought; it expresses one of the rules that ineffably underpins our thinking and acting (normally) in the world. Any *merely* spoken or hypothetical rejection of that rule (particularly one based on a *fictional* scenario), such as Descartes's, is idle; not only because rejecting it has no *practical* resonance in our life, but because its rejection is *logically* impossible: it is one of those bounds of sense without which we, humans, *necessarily* drift into nonsense. Indeed, of those individuals whose thoughts and actions *are* genuinely consistent with the rejection of our universal bounds of sense, we say they are demented. In a special issue of *Mind and Language*, devoted to *Pathologies of Belief*, Davies and Coltheart list some delusional beliefs, including the following three:

1. A person I knew who died is nevertheless in the hospital ward today.
2. I am dead.
3. Someone else's thoughts are being inserted into my mind. (2000, 1)

Human beings do not normally think or act in the certainty that they might be dead or that someone who died is now alive or that thoughts are constantly being inserted into their brains. An *earnest* transgression of such bounds of sense as 'I am alive' is a manifestation, not of uncertainty, but of madness. Indeed, Davies and Coltheart make it clear that such genuine, lived cases of belief in, or acting in accordance with, what can be articulated as violations of our basic, human *bounds* of sense are cases of pathological, *delusional* belief (2000, 4). Officially – in the psychiatric world – the three cases of delusional belief listed above are categorized as, respectively:

1. Reduplicative Paramnesia
2. The Cotard Delusion
3. The Delusion of Thought Insertion (2000, 30–9)

It may be objected that some religious beliefs – for example, belief in resurrection, in ghosts, in some individuals being inhabited by spirits – appear to transgress *universal* bounds of sense, and yet such belief would not rightly be viewed as pathological. Indeed, but we must beware that where beliefs *seem* to imply a genuine transgression of *universal hinges*, they transgress nothing at all. Here, *apparently* transgressive hinges are in fact only the expression of *local* hinges and do not express the *bona fide* rejection of a universal hinge. Where they seem to challenge *universal* hinges, *local* hinges do not override, but always *accommodate* universal hinges. One example should suffice to make this clear: the celebrated anthropologist, Bronislaw Malinowski found that in the Trobriand Islands, some women, called *Yoyova* or flying witches, are believed to have the capacity to fly. It is, however, also (accommodatingly) believed that they either leave their bodies behind when they do this, or have doubles in the form of fireflies, and so on, do it for them (Young 1979, 207). The universal hinge: 'Human beings cannot fly unaided' is therefore not transgressed *in der Tat*. Any attempt to ignore or

transgress it *in action* – such as a *Yoyova* attempting to *actually* fly off a cliff (without 'leaving her body behind') – must be seen as pathological. For all local hinges that seem to contradict universal hinges, such accommodating measures will always be found. There is no *normal* transgression of a universal hinge. To genuinely think or act on the basis of such underlying rules of thought as – 'I can fly unaided' or 'Only I exist' is a pathological problem, not a philosophical option. The *serious* alternative to being certain about 'My thoughts have not been inserted into my mind by some evil genius' is not, as the sceptic would have us believe, being uncertain, but being mad.[35] In *Introducing Philosophy: The Challenge of Scepticism*, D.Z. Phillips makes a rapprochement between philosophical and neurotic doubt: both the philosopher and the neurotic individual entertain doubt in the absence of any practical reason for doing so, he notes, but where philosophical doubt differs is in not being accompanied by any correlative *behaviour*; it is 'not accompanied by the kind of behaviour which gives practical and neurotic doubt their sense' (1996, 6). Unlike neurotic individuals, sceptics *act without the uncertainty* that they are mouthing.

As she deploys her thought-experiments, the sceptic engages not in doubt, but in *doubt-behaviour*; not in belief, but in *belief-behaviour* or thought-experimentation. And the consequences of her thought-experiment must also be regarded as fiction, *not possibility*. There *are* an incalculable number of certainties that stand fast for normal human beings, and these are not assertible or controvertible by words alone. Nor can they be logically disposed of *by imagining scenarios in which they are disposed of*. The sceptical imagination is no threat to a logical certainty that is inextricably – indeed, *internally* – embedded in human practice. As he waves the spectre of the possibility of illusion, the sceptic must be shown that the illusion is only an imaginary one. That the possibility of illusion is sometimes only an illusion of possibility.

The possibility of illusion

> You think you are seeing these words, but could you not be hallucinating or dreaming or having your brain stimulated to give you the experience of seeing these marks on paper although no such thing is before you? More extremely, could you not be floating in a tank while superpsychologists stimulate your brain electrochemically to produce exactly the same experiences you have had in your lifetime thus far? If one of these other things was happening, your experience would be exactly the same as it now is. So how can you know none of them is happening? Yet if you do not know these possibilities don't hold, how can you know you are reading this book now? If you do not know you haven't always been floating in the tank at the mercy of the psychologists, how can you know anything – what your name is, who your parents were, where you come from? (Robert Nozick 1981, 21)

Little in the history of philosophy has caused more discussion, debate, meditation, worry and humility than the ever-present possibility of illusion. Thankfully, relevant alternatives theories are developing resistance, but this is not a task we need to engage in here. For, as Crispin Wright puts it: 'Our "hinge" beliefs are (non-epistemically) superior to the alternatives because, for us, there are no alternatives' (1985, 468). What we must insist on is that our hinges be recognized as what our relevant alternatives revolve on.

Our bounds of sense have traditionally been circumscribed by abstract laws of thought; laws of thought which – in our aspiration to *absolute* generality – we refuse to subject to specifically *human* parameters. This *absolute conception of the possible* is inconsistent with the ordinary, everyday conception of the possible. So that philosophers are expected to subdue their ordinary belief system and make an imaginative, nonintuitive leap to envisage the supposed possibility that there are no external objects in the human world or that only they exist. Although I am sitting here, thinking, typing, feeling hungry, the possibility of my not *actually* existing, or of my merely dreaming my existence, or of external objects and other human beings not existing are things philosophy says I am obliged to consider because they are not self-contradictory. So what is this logic that cannot rule out ordinary nonsense, but that can so radically rule *me* out, exclude me, make nothing of me and the world I live in? Here, philosophy loses touch with life.[36]

The illusion of possibility

Wittgenstein's conception of the logical is internally linked to our human form of life – and more specifically to our practices, to our inexorable *attitudes* – and this does not sit well with traditional conceptions of logical necessity. Stanley Cavell points out this apparent shortcoming:

> Wittgenstein's view of necessity is … internal to his view of what philosophy is. His philosophy provides, one might say, an anthropological, or even anthropomorphic, view of necessity: and that can be disappointing; as if it is not really *necessity* which he has given an anthropological view of. As though if the a priori has a history it cannot really be the a priori in question. (1979, 118–19)

On the standard philosophical view, the logical must encompass not only the human world, but *all possible worlds*. And though it may be conceded that the genuine challenge of *universal* hinges must indeed be termed nonsensical or pathological, it will be said that the violation of *human* laws of thought is indicative only of *human* nonsense; worlds can be imagined, it will be added, where human nonsense makes sense. And in the next breath, imagination is put at the service of philosophy: Cartesian scenarios are evoked where evil geniuses or mad scientists play havoc with our thoughts.

And indeed: I *can* imagine a world where evil geniuses constantly deceive me. The problem with sceptical scenarios is not that they lack intelligibility – indeed, it is their very intelligibility that gives them the leverage they have – but that this intelligibility is conflated with possibility, with *human* possibility.[37] To imagine circumstances in which human beings are brains in vats *is* to imagine a scenario; it is *not*, however, to imagine a *human* scenario. The clash between the intelligibility and the unliveability of scepticism is clarified when we understand that intelligibility is not internally linked to liveability – fictional discourses are intelligible, this does not make them applicable to our form of life. As James Cargile suggests, philosophical scepticism persists 'because of the widespread tendency of philosophers to insulate themselves from genuine examples, making up cases with no real context' (2000, 160). And here, I would emphasize 'real' – for, *contexts*, philosophers *can* make up, but they are not *real* – that is, *human* contexts. The confusion is not then between ordinary and philosophical doubt, but between ordinary and *fictional* doubt. What philosophers often take to be *possibilities* are only *figments of the imagination*, and so we must beware of the *illusion of possibility* (and, therefore, of doubt). A thought that has lost its human-boundedness and runs wild on the uncharted tracks of the imagination is not a 'possibility'; it is a thought.

Descartes, Moore and Lewis believed they could tamper with some of our bounds of sense as though they were questionable or refutable because they failed to differentiate between possibility and imaginability. Imaginability, or broadly logical possibility, should be recognized as useful in thought-experimentation, not in the realistic description of our form of life. Norman Malcolm writes:

> It tends to be assumed without question by logicians and philosophers that *logical possibilities* belong to a realm that is entirely sealed off from the way things are in the actual world. The order of logical possibilities must be *prior* to whatever is contingent and empirical. This assumption is embedded in the *Tractatus*. In his second philosophical career Wittgenstein turned this assumption upside down. He saw that the formation of concepts, of the boundaries of what is thinkable, will be influenced by what is *contingent* – by facts of nature, including human nature. (1986, 19)

Hinges stake out the logical bounds that determine sense *on our ground*, provide the friction which prevents us from falling headlong onto an immaculate but meaningless absolute. They ensure that our conception of what is logically possible does not lead to our having to envisage life-size absurdities as formal possibilities. It is time philosophers stopped allowing the spectre of *all possible worlds* to poison their thinking properly about *our world*. Time we had a better look at logical necessity and saw that, as

Cora Diamond puts it, it has a *human* face (1991, 6, 13). Human possibility must be clearly distinguished from nonhuman possibility if we want to resist a concept of logical possibility that is synonymous with philosophical mythology. We can do this by reserving the term 'logical', as Wittgenstein does, for what is 'grammatical', therefore reserving it for what is *humanly* meaningful.

Humanizing logical necessity

> Logic cannot be *there*, in what we do. Well, … it *can* be, and … it is something like fantasy that stops us looking there.
>
> Cora Diamond 1991, *The Realistic Spirit*

According to Cavell, two reasons explain traditional philosophy's contempt for the idea that *grammar* could play the role of *logic*, or determine *logical necessity*. The first, we have seen, is that *grammar* is only an historical a priori, and this falls short of the philosophical demand for an *absolute* a priori. The second is that it is part of the meaning of the concept of necessity 'that the thing called *necessary* [be] *beyond our control*' (1979, 119). Here, then, Cavell echoes the fear, most articulate in Frege, that logic turn out to be nothing but a human product: flawed by subjectivity (psychologism) and fallibility (empiricism). It is this fear that is responsible for the dehumanization, as it were, of logic. But the fear is unwarranted, for it is wrong to assume that it follows, from the *humanness* of our logical bounds of sense, that they are *under our control*. Our grammar is *ours*, that is *not* to say that we control it – it is 'not as if we *chose* this game!' (OC 317). This is the crucial point of Wittgenstein's notion of the *autonomy of grammar*.[38]

Our bounds of sense turn out to be less than absolute; they do not apply to *all possible worlds*. Our *objective certainty* is, as Gertrude Conway puts it, an 'objectivism without absolutism' (1989, 142). The absence of absolutism does not, however, make the objectivism less stringent or less formidable. What *is* less formidable, and utterly implausible is the chimera of a superhuman, supernatural, imperturbable *absolute* logical necessity which by dint of being applicable to *all possible worlds* makes a farce of ours – forcing us, as it does, to consider evil geniuses, brains in vats and zombies as *real* possibilities in our world.

The turn here is towards the *pragmatic* and the *anthropological*: grammar, the way we use words, is not due to some ahistorical, decontextualized benchmark. Far from being a type of *Begriffsschrift*, in advance of use, grammar shows itself only *in use*. *Logical pragmatism* – the idea that our foundational certainty is *logical*, *enacted* and *ineffable* – makes at least three contributions to the philosophical clarification of how we, humans, work: it clarifies the nature of that unimpeded, streaming certainty which carries our saccaded, tentative gropings for knowledge in its flow; it allows

us to realize the *impotence* of the sceptic's mere discursive or imaginary attack on our certainty; and it makes the mind-action problem obsolete. In this section, I hope to have made the first two claims plausible; in the conclusion of this book, I shall briefly consider the last. Before concluding, however, I would like to situate objective certainty in our doxastic categories.

9

Certainty as Trust: Belief as a Nonpropositional Attitude

> To impart propositions without giving their justification is to try to persuade, not to try to teach; and to have accepted such propositions is to believe, not to know.
>
> Gilbert Ryle, 'A Rational Animal' (CP II, 428)

Objective certainty as belief

Wittgenstein not only rejects knowing as the ultimate empowering assurance underlying our acts and thoughts, he also fills the resulting gap: we do not *know* that 'Here is a hand', 'I have a body', 'There exist people other than myself', 'I speak French'; we are *certain* of these things – *objectively certain*. If this certainty is a belief, it is a belief that does not have a proposition as its object, and it is a belief that eludes doubt altogether. So, asks Wittgenstein, can one speak of 'belief' at all here?

> If the shopkeeper wanted to investigate each of his apples without any reason, for the sake of being certain about everything, why doesn't he have to investigate the investigation? And can one talk of belief here (I mean belief as in 'religious belief', not surmise)? All psychological terms merely distract us from the thing that really matters. (OC 459)

Here Wittgenstein has already ruled out that the kind of belief which characterizes the shopkeeper's unquestioning attitude to his investigation is a *propositional* belief (it is 'not surmise'), but he wonders if one can even call it a belief 'as in "religious belief" ' – in other words, a kind of faith or *belief in*? The question is: can hinge certainty be called a belief at all? All psychological terms, worries Wittgenstein, seem to lead us away from the kind of assurance in question here. And yet, he does not give up talk of belief. The passage above is dated 30.3 [1951]. On 9.4 [1951], he is still pondering

the meaning of 'belief':

> Do you know or do you only believe that what you are writing down are German words? Do you only believe that 'believe' has *this* meaning? *What* meaning? (OC 486)

In *Zettel*, a similar preoccupation with the meaning of 'belief' appears:

> Can someone believe that $25 \times 25 = 625$?
> What does it mean to believe that?
> How does it come out that he believes it? (Z 407)

Avrum Stroll notes the 'complex use of the term "belief" in *On Certainty*': 'Sometimes Wittgenstein uses it as if the concept it denotes belongs within the language game, and sometimes he uses it as a foundational expression' (1994, 16). The first usage is exemplified by:

> 'A: "Is N.N. at home?" – I: "I believe he is." ' (OC 483)

The foundational use occurs in passages such as these:

> I believe that I had great-grandparents, that the people who gave themselves out as my parents really were my parents, etc. This belief may never have been expressed; even the thought that it was so, never thought. (OC 159)
>
> The existence of the earth is rather part of the whole *picture* which forms the starting point of belief for me. (OC 209)

And both uses are contrasted in:

> At the foundation of well-founded belief lies belief that is not founded. (OC 253)

It is clear, then, that in *On Certainty* Wittgenstein uses 'belief' in each of these two senses, and that he actually *does* call hinge certainty 'belief' (cf. section, 'The adoption of belief' in Chapter 1). And indeed, we have surveyed his epistemological reasons for doing so (sections, 'The rejection of knowledge in favour of belief', ' "Objective Certainty" ', 'The defeasibility of knowledge claims' and 'The adoption of belief' in Chapter 1). Still, should we go along with Wittgenstein in calling this nonpropositional certainty a belief? Remember, in its foundational capacity, belief is subcognitive, utterly nonintellectual. Stroll, again:

> Belief at that level is not a matter of knowing various propositions to be true or a kind of intellectual grasping. Instead, it is embedded in habitual

> action, in such ordinary behavior as opening and closing doors. When I leave the house my unhesitating movements exhibit the certitude that the front door is there. The belief or certitude I have in that case is not a thought in any Fregean or mentalistic sense. (1994, 173)

Why belief?

The first thing to ask is: why should we want to call objective certainty a 'belief'? What could justify the desire to call an attitude that is nonpropositional, indeed that resembles a reflex action, a 'belief'? The immediate answer is that 'belief' is what we commonly call it. In her paper, 'Did Wittgenstein have a theory of hinge propositions?', Deborah Orr reminds us that we speak of belief also when referring to subcognitive or nonintellectual assurance:

> I think there is a very common sense of the verb 'believe' by which we say that pre-linguistic children and even animals believe things without attributing a grasp of, or the use of, propositions to them. For instance, we say that a dog is barking because it believes its master has arrived or that a child is smiling because it believes it is about to be fed or crying because it believes its mother is going to leave it. Belief here is shown by the behaviour and reactions of those beings involved and is entirely unconnected with linguistic achievement. (Orr 1989, 140)

Wittgenstein would delete the 'because' from Orr's description, for it misleadingly gives the impression that there is an inferential connection between the belief and the action – that, though not possessing a language, babies and animals are endowed with some *sentence-like* 'language of thought' which would permit inference.[1] But the point here is that there is no sentence, as indeed no proposition or thought, where inference could get a grip. Although belief is standardly thought of as susceptible of inferential connection, we shall see that some forms of belief elude conformity to this norm. But this purported absence of inference should not prevent us from calling the nonpropositional attitude in question: 'believing'. As Ruth Barcan Marcus notes:

> To decline to attribute desires and beliefs to non-language users is reminiscent of Descartes's declining to attribute pain to higher non-human animals despite the similarity with the causes of pain and with pain behavior in nonhuman animals and language users. The case of belief is analogous. (1990, 270)

Another reason for wanting to call hinges 'beliefs' is that in adverse circumstances – in circumstances where our hinges are questioned by a third

party, we do speak of 'beliefs'. If we were probed about our hinges (in the case of *local* hinges by someone who did not share them; in the case of *universal* hinges by, say, Martians) we would refer to them as 'beliefs':

> If someone does not believe in fairies, he does not need to teach his children 'There are no fairies': he can omit to teach them the word 'fairy'. On what occasion are they to say: 'There are …' or 'There are no …'? *Only when they meet people of the contrary belief*. (Z 413; my emphasis)

Our hinges, though ordinarily ineffable, are articulated and described as beliefs *when challenged*.[2] This *heuristic sayability* of the logical is, according to Gordon Hunnings, one of the ways in which Wittgenstein's early saying/showing distinction has evolved:

> … grammatical investigations set out to say what the *Tractatus* had declared to be unsayable. This is not to say that the doctrine that what shows [sic] cannot be said is completely abandoned. Rather it is the case that it is transformed to the thesis that what shows [sic] *need* not be said except to remove misunderstandings. (1988, 198–9)[3]

Indeed, and it must be stressed that sentential formulation does not entail propositionalization.

A third reason for calling hinges 'beliefs' is that extending our concept of belief to include nonpropositional attitudes would prevent the creation of a conceptual gap between our beliefs and our actions. If beliefs (as also intentions, desires, expectations and all other so-called *propositional attitudes*) were seen to be not *only* propositional attitudes, but *also* nonpropositional attitudes or *ways of acting*, there would no longer be an incommensurability between our beliefs (etc.) and our actions, and therefore no gap to be bridged. We have seen that objective certainty is logically ineffable and enacted. Were objective certainty considered as a kind of belief, it would be, as all other belief, a disposition, but a disposition whose occurrence can only be *in action*. This would result in the commensurability, indeed in a *logical* commensurability, between a kind of belief (i.e. hinge belief) and acting. Moreover, extending our concept of belief to include nonpropositional belief would also secure an *anthropological* (ontogenetic and phylogenetic) continuity between acting and belief: part of the primitive behaviour at the root of concept-formation would be viewed as nonpropositional belief evolving into propositional belief. The occurrence of propositionality along the belief continuum would not imply the occurrence of a conceptual gap; propositionality would be seen to emerge on the evolutionary continuum as language does, and just as smoothly as our evolving from nonlinguistic to linguistic creatures. A proper elaboration of this point would require much more attention than I can give it here. I will briefly say that it would

take us in the direction pointed to by Norman Malcolm in such papers as 'Wittgenstein: The Relation of Language to Instinctive Behaviour' (1982) and 'Language as Expressive Behaviour' (1986b) and set out by John V. Canfield, particularly in his 'Wittgenstein's Intentions' (1993), 'The Passage into Language: Wittgenstein and Quine' (1996) and 'Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy' (1997). I will very briefly outline Canfield's picture of the passage from action to language.

Based on what he calls Wittgenstein's 'primitivism' – 'his assumption that language is an extension of action' (1997, 258), Canfield introduces a three-fold typology, which he finds 'implicit in Wittgenstein', to characterize language-learning or concept-formation: 'proto-type', 'gestural stage' and 'primitive language' (1997, 258). *Proto-type* is instinctive behaviour:

> The [language]-game doesn't begin with doubting whether someone has a toothache because that doesn't … fit the game's biological function in our life. In its most primitive form it is a reaction to somebody's cries and gestures, a reaction of sympathy or something of the sort. (CE 414)

It is this kind of primitive or natural form of interactive behaviour that Wittgenstein places at the root of human concept-formation. It is the *proto-type* of our concepts, including those of belief and doubt:

> Believing that someone is in pain, doubting whether he is, are so many natural kinds of behaviour towards other human beings; and our language is but an auxiliary to and extension of this behaviour. I mean: our language is an extension of the more primitive behaviour. (For our *language-game* is a piece of behaviour.) (RPP I, 151)

The language-game's prototypical behaviour occurs at a stage preceding even the simplest symbol use. In the context of, and inseparable from, prototypical behaviour are what Canfield calls 'natural gestures'. These are *modified* action patterns: 'a stylized overlay upon the prior naturally existing interaction pattern' (1997, 261); responses that have been modified via contextual conditioning, mostly by the parent or caretaker. From these prototypes or their gestural embellishments, one word language-games develop. In the simple language-game, the word replaces the gesture and takes over its function:

> The word stands in for the gesture and does the same job. For instance, the child might say 'up' instead of a gesturing with a look; the word, like the gesture, tells the mother what the child is about. Language is thus an extension of an underlying action pattern; and we see the point of Wittgenstein's quoting Goethe's 'In the beginning was the deed'. … To have a concept – to know the symbol – is to be able to use the

> symbol-token in the language-game. Grasping a concept is a matter of having a certain skill, not a matter of connecting some idea 'sense' or referent to a symbol-token. (1997, 261–2)

As Canfield notes: 'In moving spontaneously to a use of one of its culture's words the child steps into language' (1997, 261). This stepping into language is not a crossing into a brave new world, where suddenly, because the word has replaced the deed, concepts have become incommensurable with our actions. There is a natural continuity here, and therefore no actual gap to be bridged by language-learners and no gap to be subsequently explained by philosophers:

> The passage to speech does not cross some great ontological divide; there is no fundamental difference between us and other animals. In fact, captive chimpanzees can learn to 'express their intentions' in symbols. Here Wittgenstein, as opposed say to Chomsky, is a Darwinian.[4] (1997, 262)

In sum, reasons for considering objective certainty as a kind of belief are that we could then:

- attribute it to animals and nonlinguistic humans, as we do in ordinary language, without this forcing us into a Fodorian Language of Thought hypothesis corner;
- use the term 'belief' as descriptive for third parties of a kind of conviction we have, as we do in ordinary language;
- consider the concept of belief as belonging to a continuum going from primitive[5] nonpropositional attitudes to more sophisticated propositional attitudes.

There are various conceptions of belief to be found in the philosophical marketplace, but which one, if any, will accommodate *hinge* belief?

Which belief?

The standard picture of belief depicts it as a propositional attitude only. I cannot here delve into an analysis of this picture, so a definition will have to do, and I borrow it from Dancy and Sosa's *Companion to Epistemology* (1996): S believes that *p*, where *p* is a proposition towards which an agent, *S*, exhibits an attitude of acceptance. The relation (attitude) is usually taken to be between an individual and a proposition expressible in the form of natural sentences, but more realist scenarios, Jerry Fodor's in particular, view the relation as the state of an organism or mind, a 'belief-state', itself endowed with a sentential structure – the 'internal sentences' of an innate 'language of thought' – translating itself into more regional, natural sentences (Fodor, 1981a). But the thesis that beliefs can be expressed in

sentences does not entail that the beliefs themselves must have a sentential structure. Robert Stalnaker offers a *possible-world* analysis of belief which is language-independent but not representation-independent:

> … although linguistic representation is not essential to the kind of account the strategy points to, it is essential that there be some form of internal representation in any creature that is correctly said to have beliefs and desires. (1984, 22)

Though, on his view, internal representation, not linguistic representation is essential, Stalnaker does not exclude the possibility that internal representation be linguistic: 'These representations could conceivably take the form of sentences of a language of thought written in the belief center of the brain, but they could also take the form of pictures, maps …' (ibid.). Where language is not essential to belief, internal representation is. Whichever way we look in this panorama of belief, it seems belief is at least a relation to a *representation*.

Gilbert Ryle's dispositional account of belief did, however, emancipate belief from its exclusively intellectual flavour, but not to the point of freeing it from propositions.[6] Indeed, Ryle associates belief more to knowing *that* than to know-how: 'we can never speak of a person believing or opining *how*' (1949, 29):[7]

> Of course, belief and knowledge (when it is knowledge *that*) operate, to put it crudely, in the same field. The sort of things that can be described as known or unknown can also be described as believed or disbelieved. … Belief might be said to be like knowledge and unlike trust in persons, zeal for causes, or addiction to smoking, in that it is 'propositional'; but this, though not far wrong, is too narrow. (1949, 129)

Norman Malcolm more radically pronounces some belief as nonpropositional:

> You and I notice, for example that Robinson is walking in a gingerly way, and you ask why? I reply: 'Because he realizes that the path is slippery.' I do not imply that the proposition, 'This path is slippery,' crossed his mind. (1972–73, 16)

More recently, Ruth Barcan Marcus attempted to give a nonpropositional account of belief. In 'Some Revisionary Proposals about Belief and Believing' (1990), she rejects theories that identify beliefs with attitudes to linguistic or quasilinguistic items (e.g. Frege's propositions or 'thoughts', Davidson's interpreted sentences, or Fodor's formulas in mentalese) (1990, 268, 272), and trades in a *word-centred* conception of belief for a *world-* or *object-centred*

conception of belief. But unlike Stalnaker, Barcan Marcus does not envision her *world* conception of belief in terms of representations, be they linguistic or pictorial. She wants to replace propositions with *states of affairs* in our definition of belief, thereby allowing for the attribution of belief to nonlanguage users, accommodating the possibility of unconscious beliefs, and permitting a more adequate and natural account of rationality. On Barcan Marcus's proposed view, a belief is a relation to a possibly non-actual state of affairs whose constituents are actual objects (1990, 273); '*x* believes that *S* when *x* has a disposition to act as if a certain state of affairs obtained' (1990, 282). This certainly seems a step in the right direction, but Barcan Marcus's *states of affairs* need to be fleshed out before her conception of belief as a nonpropositional attitude can be used as a stepping-stone.[8] Still, the belief options that will allow us to accommodate hinge certainty are not all eliminated.

Though anthropologically, the polysemy of 'belief' has been shown,[9] philosophically, there is a definite propensity towards levelling. Granted, belief is acknowledged to come in various modes:

- *x* believes that *p*
- *x* believes *y* to be *F*
- *x* believes *y*, where *y* is a person or a person-like entity
- *x* believes in *y*[10]

but it is often supposed that all belief is reducible to propositional belief: *believing in* God is thought to be equivalent to *believing* the proposition *that* God exists;[11] *believing someone* is believing *that* what she says is true; and believing *someone to be* late/a criminal, is believing *that* he is late/a criminal. But rather than restrict belief to a single kind of attitude, or eliminate it as a concept altogether on the grounds of its folkishness (Stich, Churchlands) or its indeterminacy (Needham), we should value it precisely as one of the most multifaceted, adaptable and indispensable *attitudes* we are capable of. Our various modes of believing should not all be reduced to propositional belief. *Belief in*, for one, invokes a kind of conviction which involves more than an attitude to a proposition or a thought. There seems to be in *belief in* something more than a purely cognitive phenomenon – something unparaphrasable.

Belief-in

The attempt at levelling has concentrated on *belief-in*. To many philosophers, remarks H.H. Price, a radical distinction between belief-in and belief-that

> … seems to have hardly any plausibility. It seems obvious to them that belief-in is in one way or another reducible to belief-that. … Why make

> such a fuss about this distinction between 'in' and 'that', when it is little or nothing more than a difference of idiom? (1969, 426)

Price, of course, *did* make a fuss. He scrutinized the concept of belief-in so as to test the merits of the *reducibility* thesis ('belief-in' is reducible to 'belief-that'). An initial examination led him to distinguish two senses of 'belief-in': a *factual* sense, 'where "belief-in" *is* reducible to "belief that", and often though not always consists in believing an existential proposition'; and an *evaluative sense*, 'where "believing in" is equivalent to something like esteeming or trusting' (1969, 450). In the following passage, the factual and evaluative senses of belief-in are contrasted:

> If someone says he believes in King Arthur, he just expresses his belief *that* there was such a person … This belief-in is very different indeed from the belief in Artorius which one of his own … cavalrymen may have had. There is nothing in it of esteem or trust or loyalty. It is just a case of believing an existential proposition, believing that there was a person to whom a certain complex description applied. (1969, 432)

Price subsequently concludes that, not *either*, but '*both* esteeming *and* trusting are essential features' of *evaluative* belief-in (1969, 451). He then considers the possibility that *evaluative* belief-in could also be reduced to belief-that, were suitable value concepts (such as: 'good thing …' and 'good at …') introduced into the proposition believed. Price accepts that the 'reductive proposal does provide fairly well for the esteeming, by means of the concepts "good thing that …" and "good at …" (or efficient). But does it provide for the trusting?' (1969, 451). He concludes that it does not. Value concepts might make it possible to reduce the *esteeming* feature to a propositional or cognitive attitude, but *not* the *trusting* feature. And this, for the simple reason that: 'Trusting is not a merely cognitive attitude' (1969, 452):

> To put the same point in another way, the proposed reduction leaves out the 'warmth' which is a characteristic feature of evaluative belief-in. Evaluative belief-in is a 'pro-attitude'. One is 'for' the person, thing, policy, etc. in whom or in which one believes. There is something more than assenting or being disposed to assent to a proposition, no matter what concepts the proposition contains. That much-neglected aspect of human nature which used to be called 'the heart' enters into evaluative belief-in. Trusting is an affective attitude. We might even say that it is in some degree an affectionate one. (1969, 452)

Price is right to say that trusting is not a merely cognitive attitude, but is he warranted in insisting that it is always an *affective* or *affectionate* attitude? Some of Price's own examples of belief-in (of which trusting is an essential

feature) do not call for an affective stance, though all his examples *do* assume a *pro-attitudinal* stance. That stance, however, may be due to the *esteeming* component of belief-in, and so trusting itself need not involve a *propensity* (be it affectionate or judgmental). But we will come back to this. Let us first glance at Price's list of the possible objects of belief-in. Finding it 'an oversimplification to say that belief-in is always an attitude to a person, human or divine' (1969, 427), Price suggests it is possible to *believe in*

- an animal (e.g. guide dog, horse)
- a vegetal organism (e.g. gardener, in his chrysanthemums, not in his strawberry plants)
- a machine (e.g. a car, brakes)
- a nonliving natural object (e.g. the sea)
- an event (e.g. victory in war; the Incarnation, the coming of Christ)

These are all cases of someone 'believing in an entity of some sort, whether personal or nonpersonal, whether a substance or an event' (1969, 428). But we can also *believe in*

- an institution (e.g. the British Empire, my university)
- a class of entities (e.g. a species, such as: penicillin (not just *this* dose))
- a class of institutions (e.g. railways, banks)
- a procedure, method or policy (e.g. cold baths every morning, classical education, abstaining from alcohol when driving, statistics, equal pay)
- a theory (e.g. Quantum Theory; some metaphysical theories or worldviews)

This list makes it clear that Price takes belief-in to be, in all cases, an attitude towards objects and an evaluative stance (pro-attitudinal) ('Evaluative belief-in is a "pro-attitude"' (1969, 452)). Kevin Mulligan is of the same mind:

> To believe in something or someone is to believe it or him to be valuable, not to believe *that* it or he is valuable. To believe in science is to believe science to be valuable. To believe in the American Way is to believe the American way to be a good thing. And so on. (2003, 2)[12]

On the basis of these analyses of belief-in, the attempt to subsume hinge belief under the category of belief-in faces two obstacles:

1. the objects of belief-in are always objects such as things, persons, institutions, methods, theories, whereas the object of a hinge belief can be a state of affairs;
2. belief-in is an evaluative attitude; hinge belief is not.

If I am to persist in my endeavour to assimilate hinge belief to belief-in, I must show either that the inapplicability of hinge belief to these analyses

is only apparent, or that there is more to belief-in than meets the eye. I will attempt to defeat the second obstacle by showing that there is more to belief-in than meets the eye, that is, belief-in is not always an evaluative attitude. The first obstacle is easier to deal with. It is defeated by showing that the objects of hinge belief do not, despite appearances, detract from the kinds of objects of belief-in. Indeed, we have seen that the object of a hinge belief is a grammatical rule, and that this rule can be formulated with a sentence, and may contain an object, including a state of affairs (section, 'Objective certainty as a doxastic attitude' in Chapter 3). But it is crucial to stress that we are speaking here of a *paradigmatic* state of affairs, one that belongs to grammar, not to empirical description or possibility. The state of affairs that is the object of a hinge belief is part of a rule of grammar. And if (as Price says above) we can *believe in* statistics, we can *believe in* rules of grammar, or indeed in grammar. Inasmuch as we can legitimately speak of *believing in* a method, there is no reason why we cannot *believe in* the *method* that underpins our language-games.[13] And yet it cannot be said that an *evaluative* stance towards grammar is necessary to our believing in grammar. Indeed, we are often altogether unaware that we are making use of a method when we are using language, and even if we were, it can hardly be said that we have a pro-attitude or any evaluative attitude at all towards either that method or its components (rules of grammar) or axiological belief about these. So can we still speak here of belief-in?

It is the essential[14] and irreducible presence of trust which, on Price's account, prevents belief-in from being reducible to belief-that. But he sees the pro-attitude component of belief-in as preventing it from being entirely irreducible. I suggest that there is a kind of belief-in that is more primitive than Price's evaluative belief-in – one which does not include esteeming. A kind of belief-in that is not only partly irreducible, but *all-irreducible*; that is: *all trust*. But what kind of trust?

Trust: primary and secondary

In a paper entitled: 'On the Attitude of Trust', Lars Hertzberg relies heavily on *On Certainty* to argue that

> to speak of trust is to speak of a fundamental attitude of one person towards others, an attitude which, unlike reliance, is not to be explained, or assessed, by an appeal to reasons. It is rather, because we have such a fundamental readiness to accept what we are taught by others that we can come to develop an understanding of reasons. …
>
> The attempt to account for the role of trust in human relations as a matter of the accepting of statements … suffers from a cognitive and intellectual bias. Believing what others say is a refinement of other, more basic forms of trust. Only in a context constituted by trust, we might say, do

> truth and the making of statements have a place. We must begin by trying to understand the nature of trust as a primitive reaction. (1988, 307, 309)

There is then, on Hertzberg's view, a subcognitive or nonpropositional trust underlying any cognitive or propositional attitude. For Hertzberg, trust is a *necessary* antecedent to believing *that*.

Annette Baier speaks of a 'primitive and basic trust', or 'ur-confidence' (1986, 110). She contrasts 'intentional trusting', which requires awareness of one's confidence, with 'unself-conscious' trust (1986, 100), the latter being paradigmatic in infants. Indeed, 'infant trust' is described as a kind of 'innate', 'automatic and unconscious trust' (1986, 106, 107). Baier elsewhere calls trust a 'feeling' (1994, 131), as also a 'mental phenomenon' (1994, 132), but remarks that, like all mental phenomena, it eludes classification into either the 'cognitive', 'the affective', and the 'conative': 'Trust, if it is any of these, she writes, is all three' (1994, 132). This classification of trust as a mental phenomenon, or indeed a mental state (1997, 120), is rebuked by Olli Lagerspetz. Actually, Lagerspetz would rather we did not call trust anything – not a state of mind, not an emotion or a form of behaviour (1997, 95), not an attitude (1998, 20), not a disposition or an activity (1998, 2). Instead, he simply wants to survey our uses of the word 'trust', and what we accomplish with it (1997, 95). And yet, Lagerspetz's description of trust is, consistently, that of a disposition:

> When I trust a friend without further ado, my attitude is one of unreflective certainty; that is not a state of mind. When I act with certainty, this should not be taken to imply that my behaviour is accompanied by a constant feeling of certainty. (1997, 97)
>
> We act; only afterwards does it dawn on us that we have been *trusting* someone all the time. (1997, 99)
>
> The phrase ['I trusted *N*'], with a past tense verb in it, looks like a description of an activity in which I was engaged before I was let down. … The presupposition that something – apparently, a thought process – was going on in me looks necessary if we are to preserve the *truth* of the claim, 'I trusted *N*!'.
>
> But perhaps there was no thought process; perhaps I did *not* think of *N at all*? (1997, 100)

This *posthumous* character of trust was pointed out by Baier: 'we come to realize what trust involves retrospectively and posthumously, once our vulnerability is brought home to us by actual wounds' (1986, 100). Lars Hertzberg, too, recognizes both the implicit and the posthumous nature of trust:

> Trust … is implicit in many of the primary reactions of one human being to another. It is the loss of this way of reacting that has to be made

> intelligible, by invoking, say, the effects of experience and instruction. (1988, 317)

And on Lagerspetz's view, trust is at its peak when it is implicit, or unself-conscious; when, we might say, it is *attentively recessive*[15] – that is, when we are not aware of trusting:

> … our trust in others frequently shows in the very fact that we are unaware of our own trust. And on the other hand, if people are very conscious about the fact that they trust one another, or keep talking of it, that might justify doubts as to whether there is much trust between them in the first place. It seems that it is exactly unself-conscious cases that must be analysed … if we are to see how trust enters our lives. (1997, 109)

Indeed, Lagerspetz comes to view unself-conscious trust as not only (as Baier has it) *ontogenetically* primitive, but as *logically* primitive:

> … trust as a conscious undertaking is logically secondary to unreflective trust. The meaning of 'trust' for us is essentially connected to the fact that we *typically* do not articulate, reflect upon, or plan our trust.
>
> This is why I typically discover my own trust posthumously. When I say, 'I trust*ed* her' … (1998, 31)

Indeed, one can say that Lagerspetz's main objection to Baier is that, though she considers unself-conscious or unreflective trust, she misses the way in which the *posthumous* character of trust – that is, absence of reflection and awareness in trusting – is *constitutive of* our notion of trust (1997, 109):

> … the posthumous character of trusting is not just a contingent psychological fact (the way Baier represents it) but constitutive of how we use the concept. (1998, 22)

According to Lagerspetz, far from being contingent or limited to infant trust, unself-consciousness is a *logical* feature of trust. This makes *entrusting* and *deciding to trust*, second-order trust. It is easy to conclude that Lagerspetz would have us call Baier's 'primitive or basic trust' or 'ur-confidence': 'trust', and deprive secondary or cognitive occurrences of trust of their name. Rather, I suggest that we retain the term 'trust' for cases of cognitive (secondary) and noncognitive (primary) trust – that is, for all trust that is an evaluative pro-attitude – and reserve the notion of *ur-trust*[16] for trust that is not merely primary, but *primitive* – that is, for trust that is not evaluative.

Objective certainty as primitive trust or *ur-trust*

Ur-trust is a noncognitive belief-in which is more like a *counting on* than a heart-felt proclivity; a trust that is a *relying on* (OC 603), rather than a

valuing. The notions of *counting on* or *relying on* do not imply a valuing or a pro-attitude (indeed, I can *count on* someone being late or unreliable); nor do they necessitate an evaluation (grammatical rules stand fast for me; they count for me and I count on them, like a scaffolding, but I do so *without a thought*). Some *things* I rely on, I *take on trust*, without a moment's thought, and therefore no evaluation: letters normally arrive at their destination; the apparatus I am using for my experiment exists; the figures on the paper do not switch of their own accord. Indeed (philosophical circumstances excepted), the moment I do give the object of my trust a thought is the moment I no longer trust. The difference between nonevaluative and evaluative trust is similar to that between walking on a smooth, wide road, and walking a tightrope. In the first instance, I do not think about the road being there or about whether I will be able to walk. I walk thoughtlessly, and do so expertly. In the second instance, every movement is calculated, and precarious. Indeed, when my dance instructor blurts out: 'Trust your body!', he is precisely instructing me to forget my body, *not to think* about it or be conscious of it, not to control and evaluate my movements, but to *rely on my body* utterly, without a thought.[17]

The kind of basic belief-in or trust in question here is a kind of *blind* faith. Yet it is not blind in that it is due to a *leap* of faith, or a bet or gamble we take. Trust here is blind not in the sense of being foolhardy or incapacitated, but in the sense that we do not ask or need to see at all in order to trust. There is no evaluative moment prefacing or accompanying the trust. The evaluative stance is characteristic of secondary trust, not of *primitive*, or *ur-trust*. Ur-trust is an unapprehensive, uncalculated, nonconscious trust. It is a neutral relying on, or counting on, the phenomenological description of which makes it seem like a reflex action, a direct taking-hold. To trust here is not to be suitably assured that something is trustworthy, nor is it to be favourably inclined, but simply: to *take on trust*.

In *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein speaks of trusting

- *tout court*: 'Must I not begin to trust somewhere?' (OC 150)
- someone, myself (OC 150)
- some things (OC 337)
- something (OC 509)
- textbooks (OC 600), statements (OC 604),[18] evidence (OC 672)

In all these passages, Wittgenstein is attempting to define objective certainty. In associating objective certainty to a kind of trust, trust is shown as having the following features. It is:

- *groundless (not due to reasoning)*

  What kind of grounds have I got for trusting text-books of experimental physics?

  I have no grounds for not trusting them. And I trust them. (OC 600)

- *nonpropositional*;
- *not susceptible of doubt, hesitation or degree*
  One cannot make experiments if there are not some things that one does not doubt. But that does not mean that one takes certain presuppositions on trust. When I write a letter and post it, I take it for granted that it will arrive – I expect this. (OC 337)

  If I make an experiment I do not doubt the existence of the apparatus before my eyes. I have plenty of doubts, but not that. If I do a calculation I believe, without any doubts, that the figures on the paper aren't switching of their own accord, and I also trust my memory the whole time, and trust it without any reservation. The certainty here is the same as that of my never having been on the moon. (OC 337)
- *grammatical*
  I really want to say that a language-game is only possible if one trusts something (I did not say 'can trust something'). (OC 509)
- *foundational*
  How does someone judge which is his right and which his left hand? How do I know that my judgment will agree with someone else's? How do I know that this colour is blue? If I don't trust *myself* here, why should I trust anyone else's judgment? Is there a why? Must I not begin to trust somewhere? That is to say: somewhere I must begin with not-doubting; and that is not, so to speak, hasty but excusable: it is part of judging. (OC 150; cf. also OC 672)

Wittgenstein, then, explicitly depicts objective certainty as a kind of groundless, unreasoned, unreflective, nonpropositional, grammatical, unhesitating, unswerving and foundational *trust*. I will now briefly show that Lagerspetz's analysis of noncognitive or primary trust could just as well have been an analysis of objective certainty.

Objective certainty, we have seen, is not the positive side of the coin of certainty; uncertainty or doubt being the negative. With objective certainty, there is no *possibility* of hesitation or doubt. Similarly, Lagerspetz's primary trust does not admit of doubt or hesitation: there is no possibility of *distrust* or *antitrust*, or indeed of *coming to trust* or *deciding to trust*. It is only in secondary trust, in our *contemplating trust*, that the possibility of distrust enters:

> *To see something as trust* is to take the possibility of betrayal into account; but *to actually trust* is precisely not to recognize betrayal as a genuine possibility. (1997, 114; my emphasis)

So that primary trust, like objective certainty, is not bipolar. Only secondary trust has distrust as its flipside. Like objective certainty, primary trust is not a conclusion of reflection, but a direct taking-hold. No consideration, hesitation, suspicion, choice or decision prefaces it, and therefore no evaluation *leading to* trust (or distrust) either. This makes primary trust as *unreflective*

and *unself-conscious* as objective certainty:

> … the lack of awareness and reflection that usually characterises trust is not accidental, but essential to what trust means. (1998, 46)

Reflexion, awareness, articulation or hesitation ensure that we are not in the presence of *primitive trust*, but of (the decision to) trust; in the presence of what, echoing Wittgenstein's reference to a *struggling certainty* (OC 357), we might call a *struggling trust*. That is, a secondary trust:

> … trust as a conscious undertaking is logically secondary to unreflective trust. The meaning of 'trust' for us is essentially connected to the fact that we *typically* do not articulate, reflect upon, or plan our trust.
>
> This is why I typically discover my own trust posthumously. When I say, 'I trust*ed* her' … (1998, 31)

Primary trust is also as *ineffable* as objective certainty:

> … paradoxically, the notion of trust is logically tied up with the fact that our trust will implicitly be called into question once we start *talking* about it. (1998, 32; emphasis in the original)

And Lagerspetz makes himself the connection with objective certainty:

> A similar sense of paradox runs through Wittgenstein's discussions of the sense of 'I know …' or, 'I am certain …' … Take an example of something so obviously true that it would not occur to us to doubt it: what I see standing a few yards away from me, on a clear (32) sunny day, is a tree. But once I say I know it or that I am certain about it, it will feel appropriate to ask *how* I know it and *how* certain I can reasonably be. Scepticism creeps in.
>
> The lesson is not that we can never be certain of anything. But unquestioning certainty is tacit. The *language* of certainty, on the other hand, belongs to a situation where our certainty is called into question and we *assert* it against conceivable doubt. (1998, 32–3)

I have been trying to link objective certainty to trust, and found Lagerspetz linking trust to objective certainty. And yet, Lagerspetz would object to calling objective certainty – as indeed he objects to calling any kind of so-called 'basic trust' – a 'trust'.[19] On his view, for trust to be worthy of the name, there must coexist the possibility of *not* trusting. Lagerspetz refuses to call something 'trust' that does not admit of the logical possibility of the absence of that trust. For him, 'speaking of trust normally implies an imaginable possibility of disappointment' (1998, 47) or of 'risk':

> Speaking of trust implies an 'outside' perspective from which one can imaginably suggest a risk of betrayal. …

> To trust that the natural order will not break down is to trust that *the unimaginable* will not happen. (1998, 133, 147)

So that, for Lagerspetz, to call 'trust' something that is logically impervious to distrust 'must be tautologous' (1998, 161). This, of course, does not mean that *actually trusting* requires envisaging the possibility of not trusting – as we have seen, for Lagerspetz: 'to actually trust is precisely not to recognize betrayal as a genuine possibility' (1997, 114). There must be, however, 'an "outside" perspective from which one can imaginably suggest a risk of betrayal'.

This 'outside perspective' is, I suggest, provided by pathological cases – indeed, in such cases of mental pathology as were discussed in the previous chapter, and of physiological pathology as were discussed in the section, 'Auto-perceptual hinges' in Chapter 6. When Lagerspetz speaks of the break-down of the natural order as *unimaginable*, and that therefore to speak of *trusting* it would be superfluous or 'tautologous', he fails to envisage cases where the natural order, or the normal order, *does* break down. Where, that is, what seems to be totally impervious to betrayal, risk and distrust are not, or are no longer, impervious to them. There *is* an imaginable possibility of *losing* trust, or indeed of never having trusted, in cases where risk or betrayal or distrust seem unimaginable – for example, the possibility of *not* trusting one's body (loss of proprioception); of *not* trusting that others have beliefs, desires, 'minds' (autism); of *not* trusting that our thoughts are our own, or of *not* trusting that we are alive (delusional beliefs). The normal, ineffable, recessive presence of trust in our (having a) body; in our fellow humans having thoughts, feelings, desires, beliefs; in thoughts not being inserted in our brain; in our being alive and not dead, *can* and *does* break down. A risk of betrayal, a possibility of disappointment *are* imaginable – indeed they occur. There *is* an 'outside' possibility of the absence, betrayal or break down of 'basic trust', and so basic trust *does*, however recessively, deserve its name.

Objective certainty, as was suggested, is a *blind trust* – one, precisely, that does not envisage, consider or imagine the possibility of distrust. It is a trust that is not *experienced as trust*, but rather shows itself in the absence of mistrust – that is, in our *taking-hold* of something, *directly*, without any doubts – the way we take hold of a towel. Trust here is better described as the *utter* absence of distrust – 'I had no thought of its possibly collapsing' (PI 574) – than the lived experience of trust. It is an *excluder concept*. Rather than affirm itself, it excludes something: 'distrust' or 'mistrust'. Indeed, trust here is a default attitude, and any absence of it the exception. It is recessive – a background, default and unconscious certainty. Its default status does not make it less effective or operative; it only makes it less of a conscious experience. Like proprioception, it does not manifest itself as a kind of trust, until it is lost.

As we have seen, then, objective certainty shares the unreflective, unself-conscious, inarticulate and seamless character of primary trust, but because

Primitive objective certainty	**Evaluative**	**Factual**
– pro-attitude – reducible – cognitive	+ pro-attitude – reducible – cognitive	– pro-attitude + reducible + cognitive
towards objects (rules of grammar, including grammatical objects, instruments, and states of affairs)	*towards objects*	*towards propositions*
PRIMITIVE OR UR-TRUST	**TRUST**	**BELIEF-THAT**

Chart 9.1 Belief-in

of Lagerspetz's opposition to calling any basic trust a kind of 'trust', I have distinguished his otherwise very close account of *primary* trust to my account of objective certainty, by calling objective certainty a *primitive* or *ur-trust*.

Chart 9.1 is an attempt to incorporate my account of *ur-trust* in Price's analysis of belief-in (evaluative and factual) and Lagerspetz's analysis of trust (primary and secondary).

Difference between hinge belief and other kinds of belief

Like all belief, hinge belief is a disposition[20] and an occurrence. It differs, however, from all other forms of belief in that its occurrence *cannot* be propositional. I can manifest my *belief that* 'All men are machos' by:

- *saying* so, by asserting my belief;
- *enacting* or *showing* my belief *in* what I say and do: for example, by saying: 'Men view women as inferior'; by shunning men, putting them down, not hiring them, and so on.

In the following various modes of belief, I can manifest

- my *believing someone* by saying: 'I believe you' and/or by acting in such a way that shows I have accepted her statement as trustworthy;
- my *belief in* God by saying: 'I believe in God' and/or by going to church, praying, and so on;
- my *believing someone to be* a thief by saying to the police: 'I believe *X* is a thief' and/or by effecting a citizen's arrest, turning him in, and so on.

The difference between these and the kind of *belief-in* that is *hinge* belief is that, as we have seen, I cannot meaningfully assert my hinge belief.

Objective certainty[21] as faith-in or persuasion

Objective certainty is not a mirror-like reflection of the world; not the truth about the world, but our trust in it. What Wittgenstein says of religious belief can be applied to hinge belief: it is 'an unshakeable belief. It will show, not by reasoning or by appeal to ordinary grounds for belief, but rather by *regulating* for all in [the believer's] life' (LC 54; my emphasis).

Like a mythology, our world-picture is drawn with instinctive, expressive, active and reactive strokes. A picture we have not consciously sketched but implicitly assimilated, taken on as our own, inherited as members of the human community from our parents and environment, from generations of human life. Assimilated without reasoning, not like a science but like a mythology. An assimilation enabled by our instinctive and conditioned trust. This trust flourishes much like a faith, like something *mystical* – that cannot be put into words.[22] Indeed, we could not *explain* to someone not sharing our form of life, and wanting to understand one of our hinge beliefs, why we hold it fast. To understand, he would have to undergo a *conversion*; become of the same *persuasion*. A conversion in that it would require that a whole world-picture, not just a single belief, be transmitted. The nonbeliever would have to 'be brought to look at the world in a different way' (OC 92): 'We should be trying to give him our picture of the world. This would happen through a kind of *persuasion*' (OC 262). For at some point, our reasons give out, explanation comes to an end:

> … but wouldn't I give him *reasons*? Certainly; but how far do they go? At the end of reasons comes *persuasion*. (Think what happens when missionaries convert natives.) (OC 612)

We too, as children, have been initiated into our form of life, have become adepts. But as children, as human children, we have believed straight off: 'The schoolboy *believes* his teachers and his schoolbooks' (OC 263). Where we did not need to be converted, disposed as we were, instinctively, to trust, a nonbeliever would have to be weaned from previous beliefs. We would have to take him into the fold, have him live within our form of life, do what we do, act like us, expect some things and not others. The game must be learned *practically*. Outside of such *practice*, no conversion is possible, for our hinge beliefs are not propositionally transmissible or rationally demonstrable. Here again, certainty exhibits the traits of religious belief. Indeed, in opposition to the 'theorists who have undertaken to explain religion in rational terms', to see it primarily as 'a system of ideas' where rites would be secondary, Durkheim points out that 'the real function of religion is not to make us think, to enrich our knowledge, nor to add to the conceptions which we owe to science …, but rather, it is to *make us act, to aid us to live*' (1976, 416; my emphasis). The efficacy of religion resides in *acting out* its

rites: 'The cult is not simply a system of signs by which the faith is outwardly translated'; rather it is 'the regularly repeated acts which form the cult' (1976, 417).

Objective certainty, like religious belief, is ultimately an *enacted faith*.[23] Our hinge beliefs are visible in our attitude, in our acting and practice, and can be acquired only through emulation, assimilation and performance. Much like a 'tradition', they are 'not something a man can learn; not a thread he can pick up when he feels like it; any more than a man can choose his own ancestors' (CV 76). Those who would require *conversion* into our form of life would have had another tradition. In order to adhere to our form of life, to *react* like human beings, they would need be again, *act* again as little children.

Conclusion

> ... the thought that our most fundamental evidential transitions may be sanctioned by essentially groundless yet in no sense unreasonable beliefs, lives to fight on.
>
> Crispin Wright (1985, 467)

Philosophical sceptics live in a speculative no man's land. Spontaneous, unquestioned engagement is what they overlook. A simple, fundamental trust without which we can no more live than know and doubt.[24] In this we are most like animals; there is no verifying that we and the world exist but only an acting and being in the world. An infant's groping for his mother's breast questions nothing and, looking at its reflection in the mirror, does not wonder *that* it is but simply *reaches out*. Ur-trust is the prime mover. It is there at our birth,[25] and is the fuel that compels us to action and propels our whole system of beliefs. Immovable at the foundations, at the level of instinct and acquired instinct, primitive trust begins to waver as soon as we leave bedrock. There, gradation begins. As we enter the realm of intellect and claims to knowledge, trust gives way to mistrust. The need for verification is the trademark of knowledge. It befits the scientist to withhold her trust, to repeatedly attempt falsification so as to feel suitably justified in finally granting her trust. And yet though her quest is unending, her wariness is not. Her mistrust is based on trust. Her doubt comes after belief. Her entire enquiry is based on certainties which she has not tested and would not think of testing: she has eyes, her eyes do not normally deceive her, water does not have the same properties as blood, she lives in a world inhabited by scientists and nonscientists, she will in some not-too-distant future need to eat and to sleep.

Our certainty about some things is such that if ever questioned, our reaction would be extreme: 'It is so, or else I'm crazy' (Z 408). There is no justifying our certainty. It is not truth, but neither is it flippancy. Objective

certainty is our ultimate seriousness, that for which we would wager our sanity. It is the point of ultimate trust: where we finally trust the world and where the world can finally trust us, for here we are '*incapable* of falsehood' (OC 436). From here we get our start. Here we are sure, we take hold, we are certain of our footing. We do not get here from knowing but get to knowing from here. So much has Wittgenstein made clear – there *is* certainty before knowledge.

Conclusion: No Gap to Mind

> For the most part, we act unreflectively, as do lions.
> Richard Jeffrey 1985, 'Animal Interpretation'

Since Descartes first put it in the machine, not many philosophers have attempted to get the ghost out. In contemporary physicalism and functionalism, we find the idea that whatever we think or do must have first been processed in some way. This, in itself, would be trivially acceptable if the process were not posited as explanatory. If, that is, it were a mere mechanical description of what happens in our bodies when we speak or move, a description having no significant link with *why* we speak or move – with our (particular) *reasons* for saying 'Good morning' or waving goodbye. But according to Physicalists and Functionalists, our thinking and acting are not only *causally* dependent on some hardware, be it a neurological or functional (computer-like) framework, they are *grounded* on it, or reducible to it. The brain is not merely one of the vital organs without which we cannot live, and therefore think or act, it is – unlike the heart or the liver – the very source of our acting and thinking. Not simply a mechanical *enabler*, the brain is the *generator* of our wills, desires, intentions and actions. Of course the outside world has some impact on us (e.g. I see an apple), but in order for the body to react, this impact must be translated or transmuted into something that can trigger a move. A belief (e.g. 'This is an apple') or will (e.g. 'I want this apple') is therefore posited as the *reason* that *causes* the body to move (e.g. 'I reach out for the apple'). But how can something as ethereal as a belief or a will activate something as physical as my hand and make it reach out for the apple? How can a mental state *cause* a muscle to contract? In an attempt to bridge this gap between the mind's intentions and the body's actions, philosophers have sought to formalize or to naturalize our intentions, beliefs or thoughts. Like Fodor and Searle, they have vainly attempted to transform our intentions into efficient, physically empowered triggers that can move our tongues to speak and our hands to reach out; they have sought to transmute a ghostly belief or thought into some biological,

formal or propositional form that could then supposedly activate the machine.

According to such Ghost-in-the-Machine philosophers, we think the thoughts we do and perform the acts we do *because* of some prior internal cognitive processing. One of Wittgenstein's greatest contributions to philosophy is to have shown that, in some cases, positing a cognitive process antecedent to our thoughts and actions is misguided, redundant (idle) and misleading. Where propositionalists insist on logically prefacing our acts with a proposition or a thought, there need be only the act: *my standing up* need not be preceded by: 'I *believe* that my feet are still there'; *my cringing* need not be justified by: 'I *expect* the dentist to hurt me as he approaches with his hypodermic needle'; *my opening the door* need not be prompted by: 'I *intend* to go out'. The acts of standing, cringing and opening the door are not *prompted by* but *embody* or *manifest* or *enact* a belief, an expectation, an intention. Our beliefs, expectations and intentions are not always, as has traditionally been assumed, *propositional* attitudes. They can also totally manifest or show themselves *in* what we say and do. This dichotomy between the propositional and the nonpropositional, or the word and the deed, is Wittgenstein's late version of the saying/showing distinction. And *objective certainty* belongs to the *showing* half of the dichotomy:

> My life shews that I know or am certain that there is a chair over there, or a door, and so on. – I tell a friend e.g. 'Take that chair over there', 'Shut the door', etc. etc. (OC 7)
>
> … we can see *from their actions* that [people] believe certain things definitely, whether they express this belief or not. (OC 284; my emphasis)
>
> If someone is looking for something and perhaps roots around in a certain place, he *shows* that he believes that what he is looking for is there. (OC 288; my emphasis)

To believe something may be just be *acting in a certain way*. Belief can be expressed propositionally (*said*), but also nonpropositionally (*shown*) – *in our acts*. And if a belief, a desire, an expectation or an intention can come in the form of a *way of acting*, philosophers need no longer seek to give them some functional, biological or propositional form that will explain how they prompt behaviour. If beliefs and intentions sometimes *are* behaviour, there is no logical incompatibility in kind between our beliefs and our actions. And therefore no mind-behaviour gap. This is not to say that there is no categorial difference between our beliefs and our actions, but that the boundary between the two is porous. This is shown in the case of occurrent hinge beliefs, where believing is internally related to acting (or showing); indeed, where believing is a way of acting. *On Certainty* allows us to extend our conception of belief to include a nonpropositional, nonmental, enacted occurrence of belief, thereby avoiding the pseudoproblem of connecting

propositional belief to action. It shows us that the occurrence of a belief is not necessarily a mental manifestation, but can also be a physical manifestation, and that it is therefore not *necessary* that a belief be 'realised in' a physical state in order to move us to action. Hinges are not ghosts in the machine, but part of the machinery – perhaps the oil without which the machine cannot work smoothly and automatically.

Wittgenstein's philosophy can be characterized as a battle against bewitchment by the proposition. He was not content to unmask its misleading appearances (beginning with the 'pseudo-proposition' of the *Tractatus*), and refute the view of it as *decontextualized meaning* in a Platonic or Fregean third realm, he was also to oust it from its purported role as a necessary intermediary between mind and action, and between world and mind:

> Does it *follow* from the sense-impressions which I get that there is a chair over there? – How can a *proposition* follow from sense-impressions? Well, does it follow from the propositions which describe the sense-impressions? No. – But don't I infer that a chair is there from impressions, from sense-data? – I make no inference! (PI 486)

Philosophy has overloaded the proposition, and this has contributed to making the gap between nonhuman animals and human animals greater than it is. As Norman Malcolm points out, in 'Thoughtless Brutes':

> … the gap between ourselves and at least the higher of the lower animal is not as great as Descartes supposed. His distorted view of the matter was in part due to his doctrine that human mental phenomena are always propositional. His claim that his essential nature is thinking is actually the claim that his essential nature consists in *thinking of propositions*. When we see the enormity of this exaggeration of the propositional in human life, our unwillingness to ascribe propositional thinking to animals ought no longer to make us refuse to attribute to them a panoply of forms of feeling, of perception, of realization, of recognition, that are, more often than not, nonpropositional in the human case. (1972–73, 16)

The sophistication our language is capable of should no longer blind us to its origins, to its intimate relatedness to the behaviour we share with animals. Animals need no ghostly proposition to prompt their actions. Why should we? The fact that we are capable of intricate thought does not make intricate thought essential to our every move. Wittgenstein has shown propositions to be nonsensical insertions at various levels:

- at the *conceptual* level: the deed, not the word, is primitive. At the origin of our concepts, or of an individual's acquisition of language, is not the

proposition, but a nonratiocinated, noncognitive, nonpropositional, nonlinguistic behaviour;[1]

- at the *logical* level: the nonpropositionality of rules (including rules of grammar) – this is also the level of our basic or *hinge beliefs*;
- at the *expressive* level: the nondescriptive nature of first-person *spontaneous* linguistic *utterances* of our sensations and impressions;[2]
- at the *first-person psychological* level: the noncognitive and nonpropositional nature of our *awareness* of most of our sensations and impressions;[3]
- at the *third-person psychological* level: the nonintellectual, noninferred nature of our primitive reactions to others.[4]

And the list might well go on. At none of these levels, do we need propositional representation. Fodor's problem –

> If the representational theory of the mind is true, then we know what propositional attitudes are. But the net total of philosophical problems is surely not decreased thereby. We must now face what has always been *the* problem for representational theories to solve: what relates internal representations to the world? What is it for a system of internal representations to be semantically interpreted? I take it that this is now the main content of the philosophy of mind. (1981, 203)

– is a nonproblem. Having a nonrepresentational theory of basic belief complement a (second-order) representational theory of critical beliefs, eradicates the problem. There is no interpretation to be effected, no gap to be bridged between our basic beliefs and the world. Hinge beliefs are the smooth, nonrepresentational certainties that enable us to have more sophisticated propositional attitudes with respect to the world and to ourselves.

Our ways of grasping the world are not all cognitive or conceptual – as infants and animals best exemplify. John McDowell takes us back to Kantian categories in a renewed insistence that experience itself needs be cognitively structured if we are to make sense of our world. But, initially, intuition does not need conceptualization to be operative – not if an animal grasp is our first grasp. Yes, concepts divorced from their empirical conditions are empty; but experience divorced from concepts is only *intellectually* blind, not inoperative. Blindness here must be seen as referring only to an absence of *cognitive* awareness which is in any case not necessary where a noncognitive automatic or instinctive know-how is at work. Where, though our (cognitive) eyes are shut, we flawlessly know our way about.

Where philosophers have endeavoured to bridge the alleged gap between body and mind by materializing our thoughts, Wittgenstein has shown that there is no gap there to be bridged. And where philosophers have attempted to bridge the incommensurability between mind and world by sophisticating our most basic impressions, Wittgenstein has de-sophisticated our

impressions, ridding them of thought or conceptualization, without thereby making them less operative. He has simply reminded us of our animal nature – of the natural smoothness, thoughtless dexterity of our basic acts and thoughts. Our actions are not all generated by reasons and our impressions are not all prefaced by thoughts. Though actions and impressions require causes (internal or external; from the brain or the world), they do not require reasons. Though the brain is necessary in the generation of our actions and in the sensory recording of our impressions and sensations, the mind is not. As John Canfield writes: for Wittgenstein, 'practice is bedrock' and at bedrock, there is a kind of 'empty-mind behaviour': 'practice is carried on with an empty mind, rather than being governed or controlled by thoughts, e.g. the thought of a rule' (1975, 114). At the basic level, bedrock level, where beliefs are thoughtless ways of acting, there is no mind at work, and so there is no gap to mind at all.

What I have called Wittgenstein's battle against the bewitchment of the proposition, Frank Cioffi has characterized, in his book *Wittgenstein on Freud and Frazer*, as Wittgenstein's repeated exposure of our mistaken belief that we are proffering empirical or explanatory statements when we are not; and of our tendency (particularly in aesthetics, psychology, anthropology and sociology) to look for empirical elucidations or solutions to problems that do not admit of such elucidations. As Cioffi puts it: 'many statements and statement-sequences which are presented and discussed in the idioms appropriate to informative-explanatory enterprises really stand to us as do stories and pictures, play a role in our lives more akin to that of stories and pictures' (1998, 46). Amongst such apparently informative statements are, as, we have seen, things that really stand to us as formulations of the rules that underpin our use of language. Wittgenstein's struggle to expose the deceptions of *form* – its concealment of *use* – is focused on discourses that resemble empirical statements or explanatory demands, and are really either self-expressive utterances, appeals for further self-expression or simply expressions of grammatical rules. It is one of Wittgenstein's most resounding achievements, finding its ultimate articulation in *On Certainty*, to have pointed out the category mistake, made again and again by philosophers, between what we can *know*, and what we are unknowingly *certain* of.

Notes

Introduction

1. In his examination of 'Wittgenstein's Later Manuscripts: Some Remarks on Style and Writing', Pichler suggests that perhaps because of his difficulty with personal contact, Wittgenstein's 'notebooks and diaries became the platform where the whole theatre of philosophy and life went on. He shared the philosophical dialogue, his thoughts and inner life with the paper' (1992, 220). The later manuscripts (from 1929 on) are characterized by their vividness: 'the procedural dimension, the private struggle, the presence of personality (particularly exemplified in the secret code passages) … the conversational and reader oriented dimension of his style … his use of alternative formulations as a technique' (1992, 221). As Pichler rightly points out, an important facet of the procedural dimension in Wittgenstein's philosophizing is that he saw 'writing as a medium of investigation rather than simply as one of transmission' (1992, 240).
2. See von Wright (1982), 113. According to Guido Frongia and Brian McGuinness: '… when we consider the literary remains dating from 1929 until the philosopher's death … there is no single publication that we can regard as in any sense the definitive result of his researches. Even *Philosophical Investigations*, which can fairly be described as the most systematic and exhaustive representation of Wittgenstein's thought among the posthumous publications, is probably in some respects quite far from the completeness that he required for publication' (1990, 5). Moreover, the presence in the *Philosophical Investigations* of Part II is controversial. I concur with Peter Hacker that what has been published as Part II of the *Investigations* should not have been incorporated in that work (1996a, xvii–xviii). See my Introduction to *The Third Wittgenstein: the post-Investigations works* (2004).
3. Though I believe that the *Tractatus* is comparable to *On Certainty* in thematic unity.
4. Anscombe and von Wright in the Preface: 'The material falls into four parts; we have shown the divisions at §65, p. 10, §192, p. 27 and §299, p. 38. What we believe to be the first part was written on twenty loose sheets of lined foolscap, undated. … The rest is in small notebooks, containing dates.'
5. See Frongia and McGuinness on Wittgenstein's philosophical development from 1929 on: 'It was by no means linear but testifies rather to indecision and to second thoughts then themselves re-thought. The constant re-ordering of his own remarks that our author carried out in this period bears witness to their lack of superficial unity and to his need to return continually to the same set of problems, attacking them from new points of view and following irregular and unpredictable trains of thought' (1990, 5).
6. To suggest that the editors of *On Certainty* may have got the ordering wrong – that the first part being the only undated one should really come later – would not 'remedy' the lack of linear progression, for even the dated parts lack such progression.
7. Gombrich (1950), 456. I am largely endebted to Gombrich in this brief description of Cubism.
8. See, particularly, Grayling (2001), pp. 305 and 320.
9. Picasso (1912), *Museum of Modern Art*, New York.

10. ['In the beginning was the deed'], from Goethe's *Faust: Der Tragödie*. Part I, line 1237.
11. Rather than give up language as definitive of humans, Aristotle relegated children to the nonhuman animal kingdom. Children are human inasmuch as they can grow into men, 'though psychologically a child hardly differs for the time being from an animal' (*Historia Animalium* 588b1; trans. D.W. Thompson).
12. Strictly speaking, this is a controversial claim (see, for example, Deacon 1997), but I am, here, using 'language' in a broad sense.
13. I follow Lars Hertzberg's distinction between Wittgenstein's use of the notion of the primitive in (a) a *logical* sense, as indicating the place occupied by a type of reaction or utterance in relation to a language-game; and (b) an *anthropological* sense, as indicating the place of a reaction in the life of a human being (1992, 25) – but I add: 'or in the history of the human species'. I shall therefore use the term 'anthropological' to denote both the ontogenetic and phylogenetic aspects of humanity.
14. Indeed, in his eagerness to make him one of the 'prophets of the ubiquity of language', Rorty misquotes Wittgenstein: 'It is only in language that one can mean something by something' should read: 'It is only in *a* language [nur in *einer* Sprache] that one can mean something by something' (PI, p. 18); by *a* language can be meant a *language-game* – which includes nonlinguistic behaviour – so that the purported 'ubiquity of language' disappears.
15. We shall see in Chapter 8 that it is only a *broad* Pragmatism that can be attributed to Wittgenstein, one that does not involve notions of utility and success.
16. 'Consideration' is not a very clear translation. What Wittgenstein means by: '*Überlegung*' is 'deliberation' or 'thinking'.
17. Wittgenstein's unconventional view of necessity will be discussed in Chapter 7.
18. This is Williams's position (2001, 25).
19. It is Augustine that Wittgenstein takes to task on 'mentalese': 'Augustine describes the learning of human language as if the child came into a strange country and did not understand the language of the country; that is, as if it already had a language, only not this one. Or again: as if the child could already *think*, only not yet speak. And "think" would here mean something like "talk to itself" ' (PI 33).

1 Objective Certainty versus Knowledge

1. For '*Gewissheit*', see OC 30, 115, 174, 423, 497; for '*Sicherheit*', see OC 77, 233, 308, 337, 357–8, 404, 425, 446, 511, 524, 617.
2. For examples of the former, cf. OC 425, 620, 194, 86, 308, 337, 253, for 'it stands fast (for me), cf. OC 116, 125, 144, 151, 152, 234, 235.
3. *On Certainty* takes its impetus from G.E. Moore's 'Proof of an External World' (1939) and 'A Defence of Common Sense' (1925). Wittgenstein's interest in Moore's work was reawakened by discussions with Norman Malcolm in the summer of 1949 in Cornell (Malcolm 1958, 87).
4. 'Of course, it would not have been a proof unless … the premiss which I adduced was something which I *knew* to be the case'; 'The premiss which I adduced in proof was … something which I expressed by showing you my hands, making certain gestures, and saying the words "Here is one hand, and here is another" ' (1939, 146).
5. This is clearly seen throughout *On Certainty*, but see particularly OC 91.

6. Nor can we say that this certainty is *experienced* – there is no phenomenological content to our objective certainty. It is not a question of knowing *what it's like* to have a hand or a body or, for the world to exist. These *can* be phenomenologically experienced, but not as basic certainties.
7. Shared, either locally or universally (cf. the section, 'A taxonomy of hinges' in Chapter 5).
8. The nature of this *logical* impossibility of mistake will be discussed in the section, '*Indubitability*: doubt and mistake as logically meaningless' in Chapter 4.
9. Gunnar Svensson and Avrum Stroll also refer to that certainty exclusively as 'objective certainty' (1981, 84 ff.; 2002, 449 ff.).
10. Indeed, Stanley Cavell takes knowledge and certainty to be synonymous: see 'Knowing and Acknowledging' (1969). In my discussions of *On Certainty*, I have encountered mostly incredulity as to Wittgenstein's making a distinction.
11. LW II; see especially pp. 44–6.
12. 'If believing is a state of mind, it lasts. It doesn't last just while I am saying I believe, so it is a disposition' (LW II, 9). Similarly, 'Knowing something doesn't involve *thinking* about it' (OC 480; my italics).
13. 'Does it *follow* from the sense-impressions which I get that there is a chair over there? – How can a *proposition* follow from sense-impressions? Well, does it follow from the propositions which describe the sense-impressions? No. – But don't I infer that a chair is there from impressions, from sense-data? – I make no inference!' (PI 486). That is to say that we do not in such cases; not that we *never* do: '… and yet I sometimes do. I see a photograph for example, and say "There must have been a chair over there." That is an inference; but not one belonging to logic' (PI 486).
14. It is the focus of §§ 478–92, but recurs throughout *On Certainty*.
15. Although some philosophers (for example, Wilfrid Sellars, Robert Brandom and Michael Williams) have recognized knowledge as having a 'default' structure, and the knower as not always being 'aware' of the grounds on which she 'knows' something, such knowledge is still, as Williams explains, 'in the logical space of reasons' in that it is *open* to challenge, and must be able to meet this challenge appropriately or give up one's entitlement to claim knowledge (2001, 35). Belief, and – as we shall see – objective certainty are not thus answerable to the demand for grounds; and will not lose entitlement for not being able to meet that demand. Indeed, some forms of belief retain entitlement although not amenable to justification, such as much religious and prejudicial belief; objective certainty also retains entitlement (so to speak) *however much the facts buck* (cf. OC 616).
16. I am here – and often will be – giving the impression of a linear progression of thought for the sake of clarity, but as was pointed out in the Introduction (the section, 'Wittgenstein's style: analysis and cubism'), Wittgenstein's intellectual ruminations are neither linear, nor continuous.
17. 'One is often bewitched by a word. For example, by the word "know" ' (OC 435).
18. Here, as in the rest of this section, 'certainty' is used in its general sense (see passage quoted above (the section, 'Do you know or only believe' in Chapter 1) (from LW II 45), where 'I am certain' is used simply as a more forceful alternative to 'I believe' in the comparison between 'I believe' and 'I know'). In Wittgenstein's attempt to find the categorial nature of our basic assurance, being certain or believing (the first is only a more forceful variant of the other) are first pitted against knowing; being *objectively* certain then turns out to be the more specialized contradistinction to knowing which, alone, makes the categories *logically* distinct.

19. Again, religious belief, or indeed prejudicial belief, would not necessitate an initial form of conscious articulation. Indeed, all forms of *belief in*, or *trust*, do not require an act of conscious acknowledgement. See Annette Baier: 'intentional trusting' requires awareness of one's confidence, trust is initially 'unself-conscious'. In Chapter 9, I discuss the resemblance of our *objective certainty* to what Baier calls 'ur-confidence', a 'primitive and basic trust' (1986, 100, 110). Also, Lagerspetz distinguishes conscious from unreflective trust: 'trust as a conscious undertaking is logically secondary to unreflective trust. The meaning of "trust" for us is essentially connected to the fact that we *typically* do not articulate, reflect upon, or plan our trust' (1998, 31).
20. Though one might give up one's unfounded or founded belief upon being presented with contrary evidence, religious belief, prejudicial belief (racist convictions etc.) and all forms of *belief in* can survive rational refutation. As Wittgenstein writes of religious belief, it might 'fly in the face' of the best scientific evidence (LC 56).
21. It should be noted that in his examination of the importance of italics in Wittgenstein's work, Gordon Baker (1999) makes no mention whatsoever of *On Certainty*.
22. ' "Only you can know if you had that intention." One might tell someone this when one was explaining the meaning of the word "intention" to him. For then it means: that is how we use it. (And here "know" means that the expression of uncertainty is senseless.)' (PI 247).
23. We shall see that some *doppelgänger* of our hinge beliefs can be known or doubted, but not our hinge beliefs themselves (the section, 'Hinges and their *doppelgänger*' in Chapter 8).
24. In discussions I have had with him, Avrum Stroll sides with Malcolm in finding 'belief' too psychological a concept to characterize objective certainty. I agree that as long as belief is held exclusively as a propositional attitude, it cannot characterize objective certainty, hence the raison d'être of my Chapter 9: 'Certainty as Trust: Belief as a Nonpropositional Attitude'.

2 The Nonpropositionality of Some 'Propositions'

1. That is, in his lectures (e.g. AWL, MWL, LFM); some of his notes (e.g. BB, LPE in part) and some of his correspondence (e.g. LO).
2. 'A thought is a proposition with a sense' (TLP 4).
3. In this chapter, wherever the term 'proposition' is due to a translation, the original will be supplied.
4. 'What is a proposition?' is a section heading in PLP and 'The Proposition [Satz] and its Sense' constitutes the first part of *Philosophical Grammar*, but the nature of the proposition is the subject of more or less focused discussion throughout his work.
5. The other feature being Wittgenstein's 'preoccupation with the question of the *limits of the world* (and of what can be said and what can be thought)' (1982, 175).
6. I will return to Hacker's discussion of the nature of hinge 'propositions' in the section, 'Peter Hacker's objection' in Chapter 2.
7. Hacker makes no attempt at sustaining this, but refers the reader to his Chapter 4, section 3,where I cannot find any argument relating to this claim.
8. We must, however, keep in mind that, as Gordon Baker notes in his Preface, 'authorship' in the case of PLP 'is *essentially* a contestable concept' (xv). Although

Baker assures us that at least half the text comes *verbatim* from Wittgenstein's typescripts and his dictations to Waismann, the latter's input (and that of Schlick) cannot be neglected. Indeed, in *Rules, Grammar and Necessity*, Baker and Hacker treat Waismann as the author of PLP (1992, 42, 57–9).

9. Sections 12: 'Extension of the concept of a proposition' and 13: 'Types of propositions' (PLP 298–9).
10. By 'language' here, is meant superficial grammar.
11. In the section, '*Nonempirical*: hinges are not derived from experience' in Chapter 4, we shall see that many perceptual or experiential statements (such as 'There is something there' (LPE 271)) fit the bill. That is, their *experiential* nature does not necessarily make them *empirical* statements. For them to be empirical sentences, they must be *grounded* on the senses, and no such grounding occurs where there is no room for hesitation, where we are *at* the ground.
12. It is important to note that, throughout this book, all unqualified uses of the term 'rule(s)', as well as all references to rules of grammar, rules of a game, norms of expression and norms of description (OC 167, 231) refer to *constitutive* or *definitional* rules.
13. See Easter Term lectures (1935) in AWL 164, 201. Notes of lectures, supplemented by preparatory notes made by Wittgenstein.
14. *Weltbild* or World-picture 'propositions' are hinge 'propositions', see OC 167.
15. Glock's references at this point (PG 56, Z 211) are to passages containing occurrences of the phrase: 'mythology of symbolism'.
16. The grammatical nature of hinge 'propositions' will be the focus of the section, '*Grammatical*: hinge are rules of grammar, not empirical propositions' in Chapter 4.
17. Because it is an (unfalsifiable) grammatical rule. Like 'A is a physical object', 'There are physical objects' is a piece of instruction about the use of words: ' "A is a physical object" is a piece of instruction which we give only to someone who doesn't yet understand either what "A" means, or what "physical object" means. Thus it is instruction about the use of words, and "physical object" is a logical concept. (Like colour, quantity, …) And that is why no such proposition as: "There are physical objects" can be formulated / Yet we encounter such unsuccessful shots at every turn' (OC 36; see also Z 401).
18. For the relation of meaning and use in TLP, see: 'If a sign is *useless*, it is meaningless' (3.328).
19. This is not exactly the same 'point' as that mentioned by Wittgenstein at PI 545: 'If the feeling gives the word its meaning, then here "meaning" means point'. In PI 545, 'point' is meant to be a more expressive version of 'use'; whereas, here, for an expression to have a point is for it to do some work, have a use.
20. I am not here using 'utter' in the technical sense Wittgenstein often gives the word. Indeed, the verbs: 'utter' and 'express' are used by Wittgenstein in a specialized way (he usually, though not systematically, refers to the nondescriptive deliverances of our psychological states as 'utterances' (*Äusserungen*) or 'expressions' (*Ausdrücke*) (cf. respectively, OC 510 and RPP I, 572). Nontechnically, however, we can speak of *uttering* any word or sentence.
21. The distinction Wittgenstein *does* explicitly make is that between saying and *showing* (cf. the section, 'Saying versus showing' in Chapter 2 below), which I believe subsumes the saying/speaking distinction, but I cannot engage in this discussion here.
22. If 'meaning is use', use and meaning (or sense) are internally related. The relation is also present in TLP: 'If a sign is *useless*, it is meaningless' (3.128). I am now suggesting that use (and so meaning or sense) and sayability are internally related.

23. And at least up to MWL: 'Sense [is] correlative to "proposition"' (MWL 66).
24. The later Wittgenstein's inclusion of *expressions* in the realm of the sayable implies that what is said does not always have a truth-value – contrary to the Tractarian remark: '… what can be said; i.e. propositions of natural science' (6.53).
25. ' "Only you can know if you had that intention." One might tell someone this when one was explaining the meaning of the word "intention" to him. For then it means: *that* is how we use it / (And here "know" means that the expression of uncertainty is senseless.)' (PI 247). It is precisely in that certainty here is indubitable – indeed, logical or grammatical – that it does not make sense to say the sentence in question in the flow of the language-game. It can only be articulated as a *grammatical* elucidation – when one is 'explaining the meaning of the word "intention"'. One might object that the give-and-take of linguistic instruction is itself a language-game. I would then say that it is rather a kind of meta-language-game, in which the rules of the real game are defined.
26. 'To say: "This combination of words makes no sense" excludes it from the sphere of language' (PI 499); 'When a sentence is called senseless, it is not as it were its sense that is senseless. But a combination of words is being excluded from the language, withdrawn from circulation' (PI 500).
27. Here, as Duncan Pritchard, has rightly pointed out to me, we may be tempted to invoke Gricean implicatures. Indeed, these constitute, as Charles Travis puts it, 'a form of account on which many bizarre things we "should not say", would, for all that, be true' (1997, 95). But precisely this reference to truth eliminates any nontrivial rapprochement between hinges and implicatures, as also the conceptual link of implicatures to intentionality, knowledge and inference. Moreover, it is not so much that implicatures make sense possible or act as rules of grammar, as do hinges; but that they are *implied* by what is said.
28. I discuss what I call the empirical and expressive *doppelgänger* of hinge 'propositions' in the section, 'The *third* Wittgenstein and the category mistake of philosophical scepticism' in Chapter 8.
29. As I argue in Moyal-Sharrock (2004a), it is this *apparent* inconsistency that leads to interpretations of the *Tractatus* as repudiating itself.
30. I owe this rapprochement to Kevin Mulligan (1997).
31. Here, 'uttering' and 'expressing' are used in their technical sense.
32. These expressions are not Wittgenstein's. I list them as more adaptable or grammatical alternatives to 'spoken', for cases where 'sentences' or 'rules', rather than (strings of) words are the subject of the sentence.
33. From now on, I refer exclusively to *genuine* propositions as propositions; unless I put the word in quotes. Where I quote others' use of 'proposition', no modification is made.
34. As Wittgenstein never himself made the distinction between 'saying' and 'speaking', we cannot expect that he use these terms in corresponding ways. In the *Tractatus*, the German reads: 'Wovon man nicht *sprechen* kann, darüber muß man schweigen' (TLP 7; my emphasis), which is translated (in the Pears/McGuinness translation, my emphasis) as: 'What we cannot *speak* about we must pass over in silence'; and (in the Ogden translation, my emphasis) as: 'Whereof one cannot *speak* thereof one must be silent'. But this in no way detracts from the point Wittgenstein was making and which I am attempting to clarify by using the dichotomy speaking/saying: to articulate well-formed sentences is not necessarily to *say* anything.
35. In this chapter, we have seen Wittgenstein's explicit recognition of grammatical rules as nonpropositional. In the next chapter (the section, 'Objective certainty

as a nonpropositional attitude'), his recognition of hinge 'propositions' as (grammatical rules, and therefore) nonpropositional will be shown. As for the nonpropositionality of some first-person psychological 'propositions', this is the subject of my (2000), 355–72.

36. As was discussed in the section, 'The ambiguities in Wittgenstein's use of "know" ' in Chapter 1, the quotation marks signal that it is not *knowledge* that is in question, but *objective certainty*.
37. This claim will be substantiated in the section, '*Grammatical*: hinges are rules of grammar, not empirical propositions' in Chapter 4.
38. This, of course, is also my feeling, and it counters Hacker's noninterventionism or Friedrich Waismann's fatalist attitude: 'statements may be *true … , verifiable …, meaningful* in different senses. Therefore the attempts at defining "truth", or at drawing a sharp line between the meaningful and the meaningless, etc., are doomed to fail' (1953, 26). The idea of truth may have a 'systematic ambiguity' in ordinary language, but it is precisely the business of philosophy to decipher and distinguish 'different senses' – to show differences and mark them.

3 Objective Certainty and Objective Certainties

1. Following OC 194, and the section, 'The rejection of knowledge in favour of belief' in Chapter 1 above.
2. That objective certainty can be phenomenologically *described* does not imply that objective certainty is phenomenologically *experienced*.
3. I use the term 'doxastic' exclusively as meaning 'of, or pertaining to belief', and to other kinds of assurances (e.g. certainty, conviction) which stand in opposition to 'epistemic', which is said of, or pertains to *knowledge*.
4. Avrum Stroll (2003) has counted more than 70 entries (representing slightly more than one-tenth of the total number of entries comprising the text of *On Certainty*) in which Wittgenstein uses explicitly foundational language, though many more passages contain different locutions having the same foundational thrust. By 'explicitly foundational language', Stroll means three German words (and certain grammatical variations on them): *Boden* ('ground', 'soil') which occurs rarely; *Grund* ('ground', 'base', 'bottom', 'foundation') which occurs frequently; and *Fundament* ('foundation', 'basis') which comes second in frequency. The foundational nature of hinges will be discussed in the section, '*Foundational*: hinges do not result from justification' in Chapter 4.
5. The background's being *inherited* evokes its being unfounded or unjustified; one merely receives it, either from the mere fact of being human (e.g. 'I have a body'), or by transmission (e.g. '$2 + 2 = 4$').
6. Avrum Stroll draws attention to this feature of Wittgenstein's foundationalism by calling it a 'rupturalism', so as to contrast it more vividly with Quine's 'gradualism' (1994, 167, 171–2), and with traditional foundationalism generally.
7. Cf. OC 115, 233, 425, 511, 620, 194, 308, 603, 253, 404, 511, 173, 204, 395, 7, 285, 431.
8. So that in the sentence: 'I am *objectively certain* that this is my hand', 'this is my hand' expresses not a proposition, but a grammatical rule; and the kind of doxastic attitude in question (in spite of the misleading presence of the word 'that' in the sentence) is *not* a 'belief *that*', but a 'belief *in*'. The irreducibility of knowing how to knowing that, as well as the conceptual propriety of calling objective certainty a belief *in* or trust will be the subject of Chapter 9.

9. Although Wittgenstein uses the German *Werkzeuge* as an image also of the different *uses* of language (e.g. descriptive, expressive, regulative), where the diversity of the different uses of words is compared to the diversity of tools in a toolbox (cf. PI 11, 23), this should not be confused with his use of it here, where it is the instrumentality of samples in the transmission of language that is in question. Indeed, in her translation of *Philosophical Investigations* G.E.M. Anscombe has marked the difference by rendering *Werkzeuge* as 'tools' in the first instance, and as 'instruments' in the second (although inconsistently: cf. PI 53). This, probably in keeping with Wittgenstein's use of 'Instrument' in PI 50: 'Dieses Muster ist ein Instrument der Sprache, mit der wir Farbaussagen machen'.
10. 'If we call such a table the expression of a rule of the language-game, it can be said that what we call a rule may have very different roles in the game' (PI 53). And in the following passage, he reviews the kinds of case that we call rules of a game, and finds that one kind of case is when what we call a rule is 'an instrument of the game' (PI 54).
11. I will consider 'samples', 'tables' and 'objects pointed to in ostensive definition' as conceptually interchangeable here. Cf. PI 73: 'When someone defines the names of colours for me by pointing to samples and saying "This colour is called 'blue', this 'green'…" this case can be compared in many respects to putting a table in my hands, with the words written under the colour-samples' (PI 73).
12. I will use these as equivalent expressions to Glock's 'empirical application of language' (cf. passage above: 1996, 276). To say that rules of grammar are not formulated in the stream of life or within the language-game is to say that they have no empirical application in language.
13. The *occurrence* of objective certainty is not to be confused or conflated with the *formulation* of objective certainty – cf. the section, 'Occurrence versus formulation' in Chapter 3 and Chart 3.2.
14. Searle explicitly speaks of these 'Background capacities' as 'not in propositional form' (1992, 58).
15. For allusions to trust in *On Certainty*, see OC 150, 337, 509, 600, 604, 672. We shall come back to objective certainty as trust in Chapter 9.
16. This will be argued in Chapter 9.
17. And indeed, Wittgenstein's use of the term 'animal' (OC 359) reminds us that we *do* share some of our objective certainties with animals: a dog shares with us the objective certainties: 'I have a body'; 'I cannot walk through walls'; 'I need nourishment'; 'I cannot fly'; 'I must avoid jumping into fire', and so on. The term 'animal' denotes 'something that lies beyond being justified or unjustified' – and can therefore be taken to mean 'instinctive' or 'conditioned'. More on this in the section, '*Grammatical*: hinges are rules of grammar, not empirical propositions' in Chapter 4. The concept of *ur-trust* will be clarified in Chapter 9.
18. This thoughtless certainty, this *going without saying* or *taking-hold* is what Ortega Y Gasset calls a *taking-for-granted* or *counting on* (*rechnen mit*) (1984, 19; 1937, 44). For comparative studies of Ortega and Wittgenstein on the subject of primitive certainty, see Van Den Hoven (1990) and Mulligan (Typescript). Searle also talks about the preintentional, nontheoretical, nonhypothetical and nonpropositional *commitment* as a *taking-for-granted*; and this 'taking something for granted' need not name an intentional state on all fours with believing and hypothesizing (1992, 185). As Wittgenstein says: 'it is not certain "propositions" striking us immediately as true' (OC 204).
19. I do not consider the 'practical attitude' in question here as a psychological attitude, but as an attitude that is the product of training or drill, of automatic or

instinctual action. This kind of *practical* attitude is not ultimately reducible to a propositional attitude; and no emotion or desire is necessarily associated with it. It is best thought in terms of automatic or conditioned or reflex disposition or action.

20. Note the overlapping of images here, just as in Wittgenstein (mentioned earlier): '… it is our *acting*, which lies at the bottom of the language-game' (OC 204).
21. Regarding his reference to these abilities as 'mental', Searle writes: 'Many people find it uncomfortable to describe such things as my ability to swim or ski as "mental" capacities. I share this reluctance and, in fact, I am unsatisfied altogether with the traditional vocabulary of "mental" and "physical". Nonetheless it is important to emphasize that Background abilities are not dependent on how things in fact work in the world. All of my Background capacities are "in my head", and in that sense I use the word "mental" to describe them. In short, when I say the Background is mental without being Intentional there is no inconsistency implied or presupposed. I am simply saying that the Background is not itself a feature of the world independent of the mind' (1991, 291). Wittgenstein would of course reject Searle's reduction of Background abilities to the mental realm, but this fundamental difference does not obstruct our view of the similarities in Wittgenstein and Searle's *Backgrounds*: the nonpropositional know-how without which there is no knowing that.
22. 'By *capacities* I mean abilities, dispositions, tendencies …' (1995, 129).
23. I borrowed it from Searle (1983), 142.
24. Cf. Ryle (1949), 135 and 138.
25. 'Suppose I say of a friend: "He isn't an automaton". – What information is conveyed by this, and to whom would it be information? To a *human being* who meets him in ordinary circumstances? What information *could* it give him? … / "I believe that he is not an automaton", just like that, so far makes no sense / My attitude towards him is an attitude towards a soul. I am not of the *opinion* that he has a soul' (PI, p. 178). Here, the *uselessness* of what is said ('What information *could* it give him?') is tantamount to the *meaninglessness* or *nonsensicality* of what is said ('I believe that he is not an automaton', just like that, so far makes no sense). Also note that the certainty that the person is not an automaton is an *attitude*, not a thought ('opinion').
26. This, as I argue in the section, 'The *third* Wittgenstein: a further extension of grammar' in Chapter 8, is the category-mistake of philosophical scepticism. The notion of '*doppelgänger*' is also developed in the same section.
27. For example (1937), 44, 45. Because these 'beliefs' are already there in the background, then as we begin to think, 'we do not bother [*pflegen*] to formulate them in sentences' (1937, 43: my translation) '… we would look in vain in our consciousness [*Bewußtsein*] for a thought expressing the conclusion that there, below, is a street; nor have we for a moment doubted it' (1937, 44). As Den Hoven writes, it is their fundamental character that keeps us from formulating these beliefs (1990, 274).
28. Which, as was argued in the section, 'Saying versus speaking' in Chapter 2, is not to say they cannot be *spoken*. Discussion on the ineffability of hinges is resumed in the section, '*Ineffability*: hinges go without saying' in Chapter 4.
29. See Nigel Pleasants' 'Nothing is Concealed: De-centring Tacit Knowledge' for an excellent debunking of the notion of tacit knowledge, and a refutation of the misguided view that tacit knowledge is the central component of Wittgenstein's account of rule-following behaviour. This view, writes Pleasants, 'betrays the presence of a cognitive interpretation of Wittgenstein' (1996, 236).
30. Of course, in the failure of proprioception, the belief is no longer occurrent. This is discussed in the section, 'Autoperceptual hinges' in Chapter 6.

31. For example, 'My back is sore'. This is of course, not the same as verbalizing a hinge: 'I have a body'. One is nonsense, if used as an assertion. The other: 'My back is sore' is a description or expression, which uses the hinge: 'I have a body' as a grammatical, not a propositional, underpinning.
32. This is further discussed in the section, '*Grammatical*: hinges are rules of grammar, not empirical propositions' in Chapter 4. I leave open the question of whether we want to call these individuated certainties 'rules of grammar' in describing a nonlinguistic form of life, such as that of nonhuman animals. Though it is clear that hinges or primitive beliefs also function in the animal form of life. Cf. note 17 above.
33. Cf. OC 95: 'The propositions describing this world-picture might be part of a kind of mythology. And their role is like that of rules of a game …'. And at OC 448, Wittgenstein makes a further rapprochement between Moore-type certainties and mathematical rules.
34. Cf. the section, 'Mythology or *Weltbild*' in Chapter 7.

4 The Features of Hinges

1. The later Wittgenstein's twist in the use of 'logical' should be noted here. Wittgenstein's later parameters of the logical are not *reducible* to the traditional laws of thought (laws of identity, noncontradiction and excluded middle) or to the principles of modern logic; by *logical*, Wittgenstein means *grammatical* – this includes the constitutive rules of our language-games.
2. This is not to say that a *hinge* can have a truth-value, but that if 'Moore were to pronounce the opposite of those propositions which he declares certain' – for example, 'This is not a hand' – we would not say that he was making a mistake – although he *is* saying something false – because his conviction would not be due to what we would call a 'mistake', but to a more serious mental disturbance.
3. The nonempirical and nonepistemic adaptation of our *objective certainty* to scientific progress is discussed in Chapter 7.
4. See for example, Rorty (1980, 5–6), Wright (1985, 469), Levi (1999,182) and Phillips (1988, xv, 40, 54, 89; 2001, 182). For pro-foundationalist positions on OC, see Stroll (1994), Conway (1989) and Mounce (Typescript).
5. I am indebted to Duncan Pritchard for emphasizing this point to me.
6. See for example, OC 140, 144, 225, 419. *On Certainty's* coherentism will be further discussed in Chapter 5.
7. Unlike Wittgenstein's, Haack's version of foundherentism purports to be a theory of 'epistemic justification', whereby 'ultimate evidence with respect to empirical beliefs is experiential evidence, sensory and introspective' (1993, 1, 213). Keith Lehrer also attempts to conciliate foundationalism and coherence in what he calls an 'ecumenicalism' (1990, 398). And Jonathan Barnes holds that 'coherence theories can be interpreted as special cases of foundationalism' (1990, 124). For an attempt to reconcile the foundationalism and coherentism of *On Certainty*, without appealing to 'foundherentism' or 'ecumenicalism', see Schulte (Typescript).
8. I take the liberty of thus naming philosophers who share the *therapeutic* approach to Wittgenstein's philosophy, championed by Cora Diamond, James Conant and Juliet Floyd. For an exposition of this approach by its proponents, see *The New Wittgenstein* (Crary and Read, 2000).
9. 'And the bank of that river consists partly of hard rock, *subject to no alteration* or only to an imperceptible one, partly of sand …' (OC 99; my emphasis).

Overlooking the immutable component in Wittgenstein's foundationalism is commonplace in OC scholarship, but for the most recent instance, see Grayling (2001). A notable exception is Avrum Stroll who claims that Wittgenstein's foundationalism has an *absolute* as well as a *relative* component (1994, 156–7, 174–7). The *unrevisability* of some hinges is discussed in Chapter 7.

10. See for example, Pieranna Garavaso (1998), Mark Sacks (1997) and Richard Rorty (1986a, 208).
11. This will be further substantiated when I elaborate on the distinction between Quine and Wittgenstein on the unrevisability of some 'propositions' (the section, 'The unrevisability of some hinges: Wittgenstein versus Quine, again' in Chapter 7), but see also Hacker (1996b, 25) and Stroll (1994, 172–4).
12. Confirmation here is not to be taken in an intellectual or empirical sense: 'It is wrong to say that the "hypothesis" that *this* is a bit of paper would be confirmed or disconfirmed by later experience' (OC 60).
13. 'Not empiricism and yet realism in philosophy, that is the hardest thing' (RFM 325). What Wittgenstein means by 'realism' here is not what is meant in the current philosophical usage of the term, but in the use meanwhile resurrected for philosophy by Cora Diamond in *The Realistic Spirit* (1991); realism as in having to do with reality, with our life.
14. We shall see in Chapter 5 that the causal relation between reality and objective certainty is in some cases, natural, and in other cases prompted (through drill or training), but it remains a *causal*, never a reasoned relation.
15. 'I have a right to say "I can't be making a mistake about this" even if I am in error' (OC 663). The point here is that objective certainty does not mirror the facts, but constitutes the *nonepistemic* underpinning of our depiction of the facts, and is therefore not susceptible of truth or falsity. Therefore to be objectively certain is to be impervious to mistake. Epistemic values are out of place here. It is, however, commonplace for later cultures who have rejected a hinge to say that earlier cultures were 'wrong' to hold it fast. More on this in the section, 'The mutability of some hinges' in Chapter 7.
16. In the next section, hinges will be seen as having the status of grammatical rules, and therefore as *conditioning* our use of words. The ungrounded or noninferred nature of hinges is part and parcel of what Wittgenstein means by the *autonomy* of grammar; the nonanswerability of grammar to reality (cf. the section, 'An inarticulate consensus' in Chapter 5).
17. Here, 'description' is not used in the way the empiricist uses it but rather in the sense of a theoretical building-block; not in the sense of a hypothetical report, but – in contradistinction to 'explanation' – as the *noting* of conditions or norms, of 'proto-phenomena': 'We must do away with all *explanation*, and description alone must take its place' (PI 109). This is Wittgenstein's usage in the following passage: 'Our mistake is to look for an explanation where we ought to look at what happens as a "proto-phenomenon". That is, where we ought to have said: *this language-game is played* / The question is not one of *explaining* a language-game by means of our experiences, but of *noting* a language-game' (PI 654–5: last two emphases mine). Philosophy should only draw on the normative, the regulative and the constitutive, that is, it should only draw or describe our *form* of life.
18. It can be said that there *are* circumstances in which I can check *myself* to see whether I am a man or a woman: for example, having just undergone a transsexual operation. But here, it is the transformation that is examined, and the conclusion derived from observation will revolve on the hinge 'I was born a man/a woman/an androgyne'. A new hinge will replace the pretransformation

one, and there will then be no longer any grounds for checking … until the next operation. This assumes that at least some of our hinges are susceptible of mutation. In Chapter 5, I suggest which and, in the section, 'Local hinges' in Chapter 7, discuss how.

19. See, for example, Sacks (1997): for Wittgenstein 'there is room only for … the radical contingency of involvement in one set of language games or another' (p. 182). Dummett's view (1959) of the 'full-blooded' or 'radical conventionalist' nature of Wittgensteinian necessity divests it of its objective compellingness, divests the 'must' of its 'hardness'. For a cogent exposition of, and argument against this view, see Stroud (1965).
20. This was discussed in the section, 'Peter Hacker's objection' in Chapter 2. Hacker thinks of hinges as 'humdrum empirical propositions' that cannot be revised or rejected (1996b, 217).
21. I do not share Michael Williams's view of *On Certainty* as structurally and thematically divided by two projects, along the lines of Moore's focus in 'Proof of an External World' and 'A Defence of Common Sense'. I address my disagreement with Williams in more detail in Chapter 8.
22. No mention is made in *On Certainty* of 'synthetic apriori propositions'.
23. Notice that *truth* here is italicized; it does not refer to truth at all, but to Moore's mistaking for truth (and calling 'truth') what is in fact objective certainty.
24. Note the similarity between the 'peculiar logical role' played by these propositions and the 'peculiar role' played by the standard metre in Paris in the language-game of measuring with a metre-rule (PI 50). Both the hinge and the sample are here parts of peculiar types of grammatical rules.
25. This is, for example, Elizabeth Wolgast's view (1987, esp. pp. 160–1, 164–5).
26. This is part of my own view (cf. the section, '*Satz*: sentence and proposition' in Chapter 2). I complete the picture below.
27. This is Avrum Stroll's view (1994, esp. pp. 134, 146, 155–9).
28. This is Marie McGinn's view (1989, esp. p. 145), as well as Oswald Hanfling's (1989, p. 164).
29. And indeed a chronological argument cannot be made here; for Wittgenstein offers a nonpropositional account on the very first page of OC: 'My life shews that I know or am certain that there is a chair over there, or a door, and so on. – I tell a friend e.g. "Take that chair over there", "Shut the door", etc. etc.' (OC 7).
30. This is the main thesis of 'The Ladder and the Scaffolding: Wittgenstein's Nonsensical Bounds of Sense' (Moyal-Sharrock, 2004a).
31. It will be clear, then, that I disagree with Michael Williams who suggests that Wittgenstein makes a difference between hinges such as 'There are physical objects' and 'The earth has existed for many years past'. According to Williams, the first is 'not a hinge proposition: it is nonsense' (Forthcoming). For Wittgenstein, all hinges are nonsense, and this does not amount to saying that they are unintelligible, but regulative (not endowed with sense, but enabling it).
32. 'The connexion which is not supposed to be a causal, experiential one, but much stricter and harder, so rigid even, that the one thing somehow already *is* the other, is always a connexion in grammar' (RFM 88).
33. Here again, note that Wittgenstein is using Moore's example in order to elucidate it, that is, make clear what status Moore's 'I know etc' really has. He is not condoning Moore's use of 'I know'.
34. Although the options are not all exclusive. Moreover, Cora Diamond's notion of using the *imagination* to make sense of nonsense may be a relevant variant of option 3: 'Although all nonsense is simply nonsense, there is an imaginative

activity of understanding an utterer of nonsense, letting oneself be taken in by the appearance of sense that some nonsense presents to us' (1991a, 165).

35. This term is meant to cover not only the Martians of (Wittgenstein's) thought-experiments (cf. OC 430) – individuals who do not share some of what I will call our *universal* hinges – but also humans who had been brought up in exceptional circumstances (OC 262), or members of 'wild tribe[s]' (OC 264), or generally people of different *persuasions* – individuals who share our *universal hinges*, but whose *local* hinges were, at least in part, alien to ours. Transmission of our hinges would also be *heuristic* here – that is, it would not consist of *explanation* but of *persuasion*: 'I can imagine a man who had grown up in quite special circumstances and been taught that the earth came into being 50 years ago, and therefore believed this. We might instruct him: the earth has long … etc. – We should be trying to give him our picture of the world. This would happen through a kind of *persuasion*' (OC 262). *Local* and *universal* hinges are the subject of Chapter 7.
36. It should be clear by now that I am not hereby claiming that the role of assertion is purely epistemic. An expression need not be epistemic to be meaningful; it need, however, do some work in the language-game in which it occurs – and the work might be descriptive, expressive, emphatic, and so on.
37. Ineffable or, as Guetti and Read have it, *invisible*: 'Grammatically, a rule in action is "invisible" just in virtue of the fact that, to be taken as a rule – to be an actionable or capacitative concept – it must be *un*-expressed and *un*-exposed' (1996, 52).
38. Here again, as in the passage following, it is not really *knowledge* that is in question (cf. the section, 'The ambiguities in Wittgenstein's uses of "know" ' in Chapter 1).
39. 'When we were young, we were taught generic names of physical objects. That a human being has the concept of a physical object is shown by the fact that he brings chairs when asked, etc. It is said that the propositions about physical objects to be analysed in terms of sense data [*sic*]. But the fact is we have been able to learn to obey. "Bring a chair" ' (LPP 177).
40. Jerry Gill's comparison of Wittgenstein's certainty to Polanyi's 'tacit knowledge' is on the right track inasmuch as for Polanyi the fundamental dimension of cognitivity is its 'skill-character' (Gill 1974, 287). There can, however, be no question of assimilating objective certainty to Polanyi's tacit knowing, which is a 'subsidiary state' or 'an act of *indwelling*', itself 'a particular form of mental existence', based on 'a procedure of *tacit inference*', and the active use of the imagination (Polanyi 1969, 134, 160, 194, 199). But the dimensions of behaviour and know-how that characterize Polanyi's tacit beliefs certainly go one step towards the basic certainty depicted by Wittgenstein.

5 Types and Origins of Hinges

1. I borrow this infelicitous term from Plantinga (1974, 3) for want of a better term than the negation of 'disposable'. I say 'disposable' or 'giveupable' because a hinge – being the expression of a rule – cannot be falsified or negated, but only abandoned. This explains my not using the terms 'revisable' and 'unrevisable' – the former being too reminiscent of something that is subject to *intellectual* re-evaluation.
2. I have counted approximately 300 occurrences of 'hinge propositions' in approximately 200 passages of the 676 that make up *On Certainty*.

3. I deliberately do not use the term 'internal perception' to avoid suggestions of introspection, and I do not use 'self-perception' to avoid evocations of a self.
4. See OC 43, 53, 57, 448, 653–7 *inter alia*.
5. Verification or justification is of course possible for strings of words that *look like* hinges, for example, if I have been suffering from amnesia: 'My name is DMS' can be the long-awaited result of reasoning or verification, but that of course implies that the sentence is not a hinge; that the (same) sentence *had* functioned as a hinge but no longer does.
6. This does not affect the autonomy of grammar. As was noted in the section, '*Experiential, not empirical*: Experience, yes, but not as a ground' in Chapter 4, the connection between facts and grammar is never a justificatory one, which is not to say there is no connection there at all. A fact can *cause* a grammatical rule, though not *justify* or *ground* it: '… previous experience may very well be the *cause* of my present certitude; but is it its ground?' (OC 429). This is further discussed below (the section, 'Repeated exposure: a coherent *Weltbild*' in Chapter 5).
7. That is, not articulated *qua certainty*, but the same words that make up a hinge can be meaningfully articulated as a *figurative* or as a *fictional* utterance and, in certain circumstances, as an empirical proposition. I shall assume it to be understood in this paper that ineffability characterizes hinges *as such* and not their figurative, fictional or empirical *doppelgänger* (more on this in Chapter 8).
8. As some dictionaries of psychology acknowledge, 'instinctive' is 'a term with a tortured history' (*Penguin Dictionary of Psychology*, 1985); 'a term that tends to defy definition, but is generally taken to mean any response that is natural (i.e. inborn and unlearned) and a characteristic of a given species' (*Dictionary of Psychology*, Mike Cardwell 1996). I use 'instinctive' here in this general sense, of 'an unlearned response characteristic of the members of a given species' (*Penguin*), and not in either of its more specialized evolutionary or Freudian connotations.
9. 'Human beings can go to the moon' is a local hinge that can be abandoned – it may be that humans will lose this capacity and the hinge will be de-hinged, as it were (an account of how this occurs will be found in my discussion of 'local hinges' (the section, 'Local hinges' in Chapter 7)) – but this will not affect the hinge: 'Human beings *have been* on the moon'. This hinge can never be abandoned. We can relate these ungiveupable local hinges to the fourth of what P.F. Strawson considers as making up 'that general framework of beliefs to which we are inescapably committed': belief in (1) the existence of body/world/external objects; (2) the existence of other minds; (3) the reliability of induction; (4) the reality and determinateness of the past (1985, 29).
10. Some of our acquired hinges have their origin in *epistemic* assimilation (e.g. 'Human beings can go to the moon'), but their hinge status is not due to this initial *epistemic* learning, but to subsequent drill, repetition and exposure (cf. the section, 'The in(fusion) of certainty, in Chapter 7).
11. The insistence on normality must be made. An autistic child, for example, must be taught what others intuitively possess, like the use of 'I' and the attribution of emotions or sensations to other than themselves. In the section, 'Autoperceptual hinges' in Chapter 6, I discuss this, and another such deviation from the norm in some individuals' lack of proprioception. But these are of course exceptions that prove the rule.
12. I use 'training' here in a general sense, which includes drill, and I do not follow Ryle's distinction between (intelligent) training and (mindless) drill. Our

assimilation of hinges need not preclude intellect, only ratiocination; it sometimes involves 'stimulation by criticism and example' which Ryle sees as characteristic of 'training' (1949, 42). I do distinguish, however, between training and repeated exposure.

13. For discussion in support of the notions of an innate trust or *Ur-confidence*, or of an 'automatic and unconscious trust', see 'Trust and Antitrust' in Baier (1986), especially pp. 106–11. Also Lagerspetz (1998), particularly the section entitled 'Is Trust Innate?', pp. 96–102. Trust will be the subject of Chapter 9.
14. Peter Winch also notes that 'judgment' (*Urteil*) in OC 124 ff is not being used in the sense of a *Satz* (1988, 270).
15. Wittgenstein does not stress training in *On Certainty* because his concern here is not with *linguistic* hinges, but with *nonlinguistic* hinges, and the more subtle modes of assimilation which operate in our acquiring such hinges as: 'The earth is round' or 'The earth has existed for a long time'. But in works prior to *On Certainty*, he clearly expresses his view that the teaching of rules is a *training*: (e.g. AWL 155; RFM III 4: Z 318; PI 5).
16. Malcolm 1989, 153; cf. RFM , p. 323.
17. The crucial distinction Wittgenstein made between what is *caused* and what is *reasoned* or justified is often too-thinly formulated. See the following passages for Wittgenstein's distinction between *cause* and *ground* (reason): PI 325; OC 130–1, 429, 474. To say that grammar is autonomous is not to say that grammar has no connection to reality at all – and therefore that it has an ideal or transcendental status – but only that it has no *rational* connection to reality. Bernard Williams makes this unwarranted leap when he argues that Wittgenstein's view of language as not *justified* or *explained by*, or *corresponding to*, the world, makes it independent of the world, therefore attributing to the late Wittgenstein the transcendental idealism of the earlier (Williams 1974). To interpret the *autonomy of grammar* as implying that grammar is *utterly* independent of reality is as mistaken as to believe that grammar has empirical grounds (e.g. Sacks 1997).
18. 'Grammar is not accountable to any reality. It is grammatical rules that determine meaning (constitute it) and so they themselves are not answerable to any meaning and to that extent are arbitrary' (PG, p. 184).
19. Putnam uses this phrase, which he attributes to David Wiggins (1981, 55).

6 Linguistic and Personal Hinges

1. 'Words and chess pieces are analogous; knowing how to use a word is like knowing how to move a chess piece' (AWL 3); using words is a know-how (PG, p. 49). Once the technique is mastered, there is no question of appeal to memory – that is, the use of a word or a chess piece is no longer prefaced by a mnemonic process. Wittgenstein seems here to foreshadow recent neuropsychological findings on memory. Though the formation of new semantic memories (e.g. vocabulary) may depend initially on information from episodic memory, '… *with repeated use*, the term becomes part of your general knowledge, and can be defined without recourse to episodic memory' (Parkin 1997, 19; my emphasis). This also occurs in learning skills, such as learning to type: 'At first, this involves remembering the layout of the keyboard in order to place your fingers correctly. However, *as practice continues*, the skill becomes increasingly automatic and independent of the ability to remember the keyboard's layout. At this stage, typing has ceased to rely

on episodic and semantic memory, and has become incorporated in procedural memory. Indeed, when skilled typists are asked to recall the layout of the keyboard, they often find it difficult, remembering the location of some letters only by trying to type them and noticing where their finger is placed' (Parkin 1997, 19; my emphasis). Yet Wittgenstein would probably have opposed the idea of a procedural memory taking over from a *declarative* memory, for even this binary approach to memory (which is an advance on the notion of memory as a single faculty of the mind), smacks too much of reification. Wittgenstein considered memory not as a faculty but as an activity, and indeed, the binary approach is itself now increasingly going towards a multiple systems approach, characterized by its consideration of memory as a *doing* (I say a little more on this in the next note). The binary approach reduces the classifications of memory systems to a difference between *declarative* or *cognitive* memory versus *nondeclarative* or *procedural* memory. *Declarative memory* is defined as a memory for *facts* and *events* that can be consciously accessed and verbalized; a 'knowing that'; whereas *procedural memory* is defined as a 'knowing how'; a memory for *cognitive or motor* skills that cannot be consciously accessed or verbalized (Toth and Hunt 1999, 236), or as 'rule-based information that "involves the tuning and modifying of the particular processors engaged during training" ' (Gabrieli 1999, 207). Summarily, declarative memory or knowledge (the two are used synonymously) is 'the knowledge that something is the case, as opposed to the knowledge of how to do something (procedural knowledge)' (*Macmillan Dictionary of Psychology* 1991). The term *declarative* has been used quasi-synonymously with 'episodic memory', 'explicit memory', 'memory' and 'true memory'; whereas *nondeclarative* has alternated with: 'semantic memory', 'implicit memory', 'habit' and 'quasi-memory' (Metcalfe *et al*. 1994, 371).

2. In his questioning of whether a mnemonic process prefaces our use of words or skills (PI 601; cf. also LPE 22: 'Is it ever true that when I call a colour "red" I serve myself of memory?? / make use of memory? /'), Wittgenstein anticipates recent neuroscientific puzzlement: 'the non-declarative memory systems begin stretching our usual notion of memory. If you get up from your chair to leave the room, do you "remember" how to walk? When you reach down to tie your shoelaces, do you have to remember how? When you streak across the court to execute a forehand volley, do you have to remember how to do so? Using the word "remember" seems strange in these contexts … How far do we extend the word memory to include other biological systems that seem to fit? Why aren't these other biological systems considered non-declarative memory systems?' (Roediger *et al*. 1999, 39). A rethinking of how 'memory is integrated with other cognitive processes such as perception, attention, reasoning, and goal-directed action' is evolving towards the conclusion that 'Memory is not an isolated form of cognition, separate from other aspects of processing such as perception, reasoning, and action, but is rather embedded in those processes' (Toth and Hunt 1999, 253, 265). This is giving way to a conception of 'memory as *doing*': 'memory is best viewed as a dynamic activity that is not stored in the person or brain, but rather emerges from interaction of the person (and their brain) with the surrounding environment' (Toth and Hunt 1999, 264). Compare Wittgenstein: 'I saw this man years ago: now I have seen him again, I recognize him, I remember his name. And why does there have to be a cause of this remembering in my nervous system? Why must something or other, whatever it may be, be stored up there *in any form?* Why *must* a trace have been left behind? Why should there not be a

psychological regularity to which *no* physiological regularity corresponds? If this upsets our concept of causality then it is high time it was upset' (Z 610).

3. The category of personal hinges is then greater in scope than John Perry's '(self-)locating beliefs' which he defines as 'one's beliefs about where one is, when it is, and who one is'; moreover, they are not propositions, not even 'propositions of limited accessibility'. But, like Perry's locating beliefs, some personal hinges are indexical (1979, 45, 85).
4. This is described by Wallace I. Matson in 'Certainty Made Simple' (Matson, 1991). Moore was delivering the Howison Lecture at Berkeley in 1941.
5. This, then, leads both Descartes and Moore to opt for *nonsensical* solutions. Descartes, leaving common sense aside, embarks on the rampant-imagination or irrelevant-alternative route to affirm the possibility that he may be mistaken; while Moore, clinging on to common sense, takes the unphilosophical 'I-can't-prove-it-but-it's-true' route. Rather than settle for these equally misguided alternatives, all we need to do is recognize that such 'beliefs' are not empirical. In speaking of the irrelevant-alternative route, I allude to the notion of relevant alternatives introduced by J.L. Austin, Fred Dretske and A.I. Goldman, but refer here particularly to Goldman's suggestion that only 'relevant possibility' govern the presentation of epistemic candidates in any situation – a move which would radically undermine the potency of the sceptic's wild (idle) hypotheses or irrelevant alternatives/possibilities (1976, see especially p. 775). This discussion is resumed in Chapter 8.
6. See, for instance, 'Cause and Effect: Intuitive Awareness' where Wittgenstein takes Russell's notion of 'intuitive awareness' or 'knowledge by intuition' to task as improperly depicting the certainty of our first-person impressions and sensations and of our determination of some causes as derived from the senses. As Rush Rhees notes: 'The confusion is in the idea that the senses give *evidence*' (CE 419). Wittgenstein will continue to reject the idea that when our use of language is connected to perception (e.g. 'Here is a table'; 'This bench is red') it is *necessarily* prefaced by some recognitional or inferential process (e.g. that proprioception is due to the *evidence of the senses* (LPP 17)). Most of our applications of colour and proprioceptive words are unmediated (PLP 208). This view of perception as primitively unmediated is not to be confused with so-called *direct perception*, also known as the *ecological* approach to perception (initiated by J.J. Gibson). In contrast to the traditional or *indirect* approach, *direct* perception is thus labelled because a perceiver is said to perceive its environment unaided by memories, representations or inference. It is argued that no intervention occurs because none is needed: the environment, not the perceiver, supplies the *information* necessary for perception. *Information* is an important component of *direct perception*: it acts like a bi-directional arrow, pointing to the environment and to the perceiver; a 'bridge connecting the knower and the known' (this brief summary is culled from Michaels and Carello (1981)). The idea that *information* or a connecting bridge, and therefore a gap, is there at all in basic cases of perception (making room for misinformation) is in opposition to Wittgenstein's view that basic perception is not *informed*, be it by the perceiver or the environment.
7. My use of 'about' or 'that' does not necessarily introduce a propositional content.
8. A specific location (e.g. 'I am in my room, in London') makes it an autobiographical hinge, whereas 'I am here' is categorized as a kinesthetic hinge (see the section, 'Autoperceptual hinges' in Chapter 6).

9. See OC 506–7. In much the same way that, although 'I am here' is, in default circumstances, an experiential statement about which I cannot be wrong, not an empirical proposition, 'I was born in Morocco' may be said to be a mnemonic item in that amnesia might affect it, but not a mnemonic *proposition*, susceptible of falsity. This is where, according to Roediger *et al*. (1999, 39), our usual notion of memory begins to be stretched. In their tentative division of labour of memory, cognitive scientists have spoken of 'autobiographical memory', but here again, boundaries remain vague and porous. 'At one level the meaning of the term "autobiographical memory" is perfectly obvious; it refers to the recollection by subjects of their earlier lives. But what constitutes recollection, and what aspects of earlier experience are relevant? If you tell me your name, is that a piece of autobiographical memory? If you remember a list of words I have just presented, is that autobiographical memory?' (Baddeley 1992, 13).
10. This would seem to rule out hinge status for 'My name is *x*' or 'I was born in *y*', but see OC 596, 598. The veridical mirroring of reality has nothing to do with hinge status.
11. Objective certainty, it must be remembered, is incumbent on normal circumstances (OC 27). See also Malcolm: 'The things that are … "objectively" certain, which are immune to doubt, in regard to which being mistaken is inconceivable, have that status for us only in the *normal circumstances of human life*' (1986a, 221).
12. The Macmillan Dictionary of Psychology (2nd Edition) succinctly defines 'coenaesthesia' or 'coenesthesia' as the 'awareness of one's own bodily condition, particularly of having a sense of well-being or malaise'.
13. See Crispin Wright – the most salient cases of self-knowledge are cases of 'authoritative, non-inferential self-ascription' (1998, 14) – and Moyal-Sharrock (2000).
14. Which of course does not affect the attention necessary to the 'drilling in', as it were, of an acquired hinge. To acquire the linguistic hinge: 'This is called red', attention is necessary, but once it is acquired or drilled in, no special focus is required each time to determine what the colour of Santa Claus's costume or the cross in the 'Red Cross' flag is.
15. 'Proprioception' is an umbrella term covering all sensory systems involved in one's sense of location, position, orientation and movement of the body and its parts; 'kinesthesis' specifically refers to the sense that monitors movement (*Penguin Dictionary of Psychology* and *A Student's Dictionary of Psychology*. 3rd Edition (1999)).
16. It is clear here, as also in the following quotations, that Sacks does not conceptually distinguish between knowledge and certainty, but this does not affect the pertinence of his remarks.
17. As Brian O'Shaughnessy notes, the body is 'attentively recessive' (1994, 209). If, in the act of catching a ball, 'we were aware of hand and arm posture *in the nonrecessive way* we are aware of the path of the ball, we would in an epistemological sense stand in our own way and … achieve nothing' (1994, 210).
18. As noted, this 'mind-blindness' (Frith and Happé 1999, 7) can be seen as the psychological equivalent of proprioception; it translates a psychological uncertainty about self and others, where there is normally a psychological *certainty*. The *objective* or *hinge* component of our *psychological* certainty is not a discussion I can engage in here.
19. I will use the term 'indubitable salience' in contradistinction to David Lewis's *maximal* salience as in: 'The proper treatment of descriptions' should not be according to existence of object, or if object is of some contextually determined

domain of discourse, but must be more like this: 'the *F* denotes *x* iff *x* is the most salient *F* in the domain of discourse, according to some contextually determined salience ranking' (1979, 240–1).

20. As James Cargile rightly notes: '… making use of the incident is facilitated by pretending that the basis for Moore's claim to know was his great confidence. The story then reminds us that people can be as confident as can be and still be wrong. But it is not your high confidence (even in a truth) that guarantees knowing. It is your being appropriately confident. The fact that people are liable to misjudge when this sort of confidence is appropriate is no reason to deny that it ever is' (2000, 171).
21. Goldman defines the perceptual equivalent of an actual state of affairs as 'a possible state of affairs that would produce the same, or a sufficiently similar, perceptual experience' (1976, 780).
22. This list takes its impetus and some of its formulation from Crispin Wright's tentative list of 'possible C-conditions for red' – that is, conditions that would guarantee the error-free belief that something is red – which he presented in a talk delivered at the University of London: 'Response-Dependence and Bald Naturalism' (April 1998). Though I disagree with Wright's assumption that this error-free perception is cognitive.
23. It may be objected that although the hypothesis of an evil demon may be envisaged as a flight of the imagination, our inability to always distinguish whether we are dreaming or awake is a very real occurrence. Granted, but it is Descartes's leap from the possibility that we are *sometimes* unable to distinguish wake from dreaming to the possibility that we can *never* be sure of distinguishing them that is a flight of the imagination. It is the *obsessive* doubt which is imaginary.
24. On this, see Austin's inspection of a telephone to make sure it is not a *trompe l'oeil* painting or a dummy, to conclude that there *is* closure to verification and an end to the possibility of error (1962, 118–19).
25. I help myself here to the terminology used by Travis to define his 'Indiscernibility Principle' (1989, 130). In Chapter 8, I argue that the sceptical threat of an omnipresent illusion is never a *relevant possibility* for human beings. Given a more relaxed (i.e. human-bound, rather than absolute) conception of what is logically possible, perception ceases to be logically fallible.
26. Wittgenstein, write Baker and Hacker, repudiates 'fallacies concerning *recognition* as mediating between saying and seeing' and (in PI 198) 'the suggestion that any recognitional process mediates between looking, and saying that this is red' (1984, 14–15). But of course, in some cases, recognition *does* mediate between looking and saying; Wittgenstein makes the distinction thus: 'The [phrase] "recognising as …" is used where you can be wrong in recognising' (LPE 238). Austin similarly points out that it is a 'gross misuse of the notion of "evidence" to take unproblematic perception as resulting from evidence: "The situation in which I could properly be said to have *evidence* for the statement that some animal is a pig is that, for example, in which the beast itself is not actually on view, but I can see plenty of pig-like marks on the ground outside its retreat … But if the animal then emerges and stands there plainly in view, there is no longer any question of collecting evidence; its coming into view doesn't provide me with more *evidence* that it's a pig, I can now just *see* that it is, the question if settled. And of course I might, in different circumstances, have just seen this in the first place, and not had to bother with collecting evidence at all." ' (1962, 115).

Kevin Mulligan notes the antecedence here of H. Leyendecker who, some 40 years earlier, had considered primitive certainty in perception (Forthcoming).

27. Russell notes that he borrowed the term from Ayer, who had used it as the equivalent of the German *Protokollsatz* employed by the logical positivists (1940, 137).
28. This is incompatible with Peacocke's claim that every perceptual experience has a correctness condition (1992, 108). Perceptual certainties are not open to the question of truth or falsity, hesitation or doubt, correctness or incorrectness.
29. This distinguishes perceptual hinges from Quine's 'observation sentences', which are 'just the occasion sentences on which there is pretty sure to be firm agreement on the part of well-placed observers' (1960, 44).

7 Local and Universal Hinges

1. I share Gertrude Conway's understanding of Wittgenstein's concept of 'form of life' as referring to (1) a *human* form of life, and (2) various *forms* of human life: 'One could say that all humans participate in the human form of life, but that there can be different forms of human life' (1989, 78). I do *not* however, for reasons discussed in the section, 'Priority of some hinges' in Chapter 7, consider the former to be more *fundamental* than the latter.
2. Not, as we shall see below (the section, 'Universal hinges' in Chapter 7), *universal* hinges, and not hinges of the order of 'This glass is smaller than Canada'.
3. Though he speaks in terms of 'propositions' rather than facts, this is the gist of what Crispin Wright is saying in the following passage: 'For some of [Wittgenstein's examples in *On Certainty*] – for instance "Every human being has parents" and "Cats don't grow on trees" – the foregoing is not implausible. Such propositions reflect a whole system of beliefs concerning the kind of things which human beings, and cats, fundamentally are. They are propositions which might be suggested by repeated experience, but which have undoubtedly become partially constitutive of our concepts of human being and cat respectively. If that is so, the conceptual space which counter-examples might have filled is closed off. Nothing will count as a human being who was not born of two parents, or a cat which was fruited by a tree' (1985, 453).
4. The subject of the mutability of some hinges is discussed with respect to local hinges because this is where illustrations of mutability are most striking, but as was discussed in Chapter 6, linguistic, and some personal hinges are also subject to mutability.
5. D.Z. Phillips writes: 'The sense in which certain questions are ruled by a language-game can be illustrated by Wittgenstein's much misunderstood example of moon travel. At the time of these remarks, of course, no one had been on the moon. … But now [that someone has], some have scoffed at Wittgenstein's example of "what is ruled out" as a premature dogmatism. This response is based on a misunderstanding. It mislocates what is being ruled out in the example' (2001, 171).
6. This too will soon stop seeming fantastic: in statistical mechanics, there is a nonzero possibility that water on the fire will become colder and not hotter. (Margalit 1989, 216). In the same vein, geologists have recently discovered that certain kinds of ice do not melt when removed from their subzero confines, and that some icelike substances can burn (*Scientific American*, December 1996, 21–2).
7. Although I have avoided the term 'unrevisability' because of its propositional or intellectual flavour (see Chapter 5, note 1), I use it in this section to remain

consistent with the terminology used in passages quoted, particularly those referring to or expressing Quine's position. Throughout, I would of course prefer we speak of rejecting a hinge, not revising a hinge.

8. It must be noted that the stress here is *not* on the word 'proposition' – Garavaso is not arguing in favour of the bipolarity principle, but simply claiming that, on Wittgenstein's view, there are no unrevisable hinge certainties.
9. This is the crucial flaw of Anthony Grayling's argument in his 'Wittgenstein on Scepticism and Certainty' (2001), see especially pp. 312, 315.
10. See note 5 above.
11. Our concept of scientific progress does not encompass some so-called 'possibilities', which can only be encompassed by the concept of science-fiction. In 'Building a Brainier Mouse' (*Scientific American*, April 2000, 42–8), Joe Z. Tsien and his colleagues at Princeton succeeded in genetically engineering a smarter than average mouse. As Tsien explains, the change that can be expected from genetical engineering has its limits. The conception of change or progress here includes genetically engineered mice being better at distinguishing between objects they have seen before and at recalling how to find a platform in a tank of murky water, but it excludes such 'possibilities' as mice taking on the features of human beings. Mice, writes Tsien, 'will never do differential equations or play the stock market'; 'Genetic engineering will never turn mice into geniuses capable of playing the piano' (pp. 44, 47).
12. Though the above passage may at first seems ambiguous, a close reading of the whole does indicate that by '*possibilities* of phenomena', Wittgenstein is not alluding to a nomological, but to a grammatical necessity. Baker and Hacker's exegetical gloss concurs: 'Philosophy is, in a sense, an investigation into the possibilities of phenomena, but not by way of "seeing through" them, discovering their ultimate constituents, etc., but rather by examining the grammar of language' (1980, 196).
13. 'I want to say: it is characteristic of our language that the foundation on which it grows consists in steady ways of living, regular ways of acting' (Z 397).

8 Objective Certainty versus Scepticism

1. See Williams (1991), xiii, xiv; 16. Indeed, Williams is all *for* the difficulty, the problematicity of scepticism, which he believes has been reawakened by New Humeans or New Sceptics, as he calls them [notably, the P.F. Strawson of *Skepticism* and *Naturalism*, Barry Stroud, Thomas Nagel and Stanley Cavell]. Williams thinks 'that this "New Scepticism" is one of the most important movements in contemporary philosophy. It represents a powerful reaction to post-Wittgensteinian (or "ordinary language") and neo-pragmatist tendencies to *dismiss* traditional philosophical problems, particularly sceptical problems, as not real problems at all' (1991, xiv).
2. See especially Williams (1991, 24–31), but the attempt is more thorough and focused in a recent paper: 'Wittgenstein's Refutation of Idealism' – hereafter (Forthcoming). In it, Williams mentions Marie McGinn (1989), Avrum Stroll (1994) and Crispin Wright (1985) as representatives of the Framework Reading. It will be clear by now that I share the basic tenor of this reading. For an invaluable exposition of the contemporary debate on philosophical scepticism, see Pritchard (2002).

3. Williams sees *On Certainty* as divided along the same line as G.E. Moore's two *distinct* projects in 'Proof of an External World' and 'Defence of Common Sense'. In 'Proof', Moore's topic is external world scepticism in its most general form: his aim is to prove that external objects exist. *By contrast*, in 'Defence', Moore undertakes to defend a body of more specific beliefs: that the earth has existed for many years past, that he has never been far from its surface, and so on. Williams believes that in the first 65 sections of *On Certainty* (as also section 90), Wittgenstein is concerned, mainly and perhaps even exclusively, with Moore's 'Proof'. His argument is about *external world scepticism* and some of its essential points are specific to *scepticism of this type* (Forthcoming).
4. On Williams's view, the real status of 'There are physical objects' is not, as per the Framework reading, a 'framework judgment' (or, as I have preferred to call it, a grammatical rule), because it is *nonsense*: ' "There are physical objects" is not a hinge proposition: it is nonsense' (Forthcoming). But, as we have seen (in the section, 'Hinges as nonsense' in Chapter 4), for Wittgenstein, being nonsense does not prevent a sentence from being a hinge or a rule of grammar, indeed it is partly definitive of it.
5. Williams replaces the *Prior Grounding Requirement* with a *Defence Commitment*: 'Knowledgeable beliefs must be defensible, but not necessarily derived from evidence' (2001, 25). The reason Williams takes our bedrock certainties to be susceptible of justification, even if only on demand, is that he takes our basic beliefs to be epistemic. And the reason Williams does that is that, as was noted in the Introduction, he cannot see how they could otherwise be related to nonbasic beliefs. He does not envisage that our basic beliefs can stand in *grammatical* relation to our nonbasic ones.
6. Whereas Williams flags the notion of context as a palliative against an 'immutable order of reasons', he carries over the same proposition – that is, a fixed meaning – in the various contexts he envisages (particularly, the ordinary and the philosophical). But the real asset of 'context', in the idea that 'meaning is use', is that *it* determines meaning, whereas Williams's beliefs have a fixed meaning imported into each context, and it is only the *status* of these beliefs (i.e. whether they are epistemic or nonepistemic), not their meaning, which is determined by the context they are examined in. Hilary Putnam also notes this superficial use of context by Williams (1998, 260–2). Note that the notion of *doppelgänger* allows us to consider the use of identical sentences in different contexts without any sense or meaning being intrinsically attached to these sentences.
7. These features were delineated in Chapter 4.
8. Moyal-Sharrock (2002) is an early version of this section.
9. Which, on Robert Audi's view, would not mean that he *refutes* scepticism, but only *rebuts* it. According to Audi, the *refutation* of scepticism would require that we show that a sceptical thesis is false, 'where this implies … showing a positive result such that there is (or at least can be) justification for beliefs about the external world'; the *rebuttal* of scepticism requires only that we show that one or more sceptical arguments is not sound or that a sceptical conclusion has not been established (1993, 325). But a rebuttal should be deemed sufficient to nip scepticism in the bud, as it were – making refutation irrelevant.
10. See the Introduction to, *The Third Wittgenstein* (2004). I take the *third* Wittgenstein corpus as essentially consisting of all of Wittgenstein's writings from approximately 1946. This includes Part II of *Philosophical Investigations*, *On Certainty*, *Remarks on Colour*, *Zettel* and all his writings on philosophical psychology. I give my reasons for this division in the Introduction to that

collection. In contrast to my stance, there is a recent movement in Wittgenstein scholarship which argues that there really is only *one* Wittgenstein. This movement has a therapeutic thrust, according to which Wittgenstein's work is seen as a unified whole consistent in its absence of ideology and in its related insistence on a therapeutic approach to philosophy, but not all philosophers who see a continuity in Wittgenstein's work see it exclusively in *methodological* terms. Recent works upholding the *thematic* unity of Wittgenstein's philosophy are John Koethe's *The Continuity of Wittgenstein's Thought* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1996) and José Medina's *The Unity of Wittgenstein's Philosophy: Necessity, Intelligibility, and Normativity* (SUNY, 2002). There is no question that Wittgenstein's work can be seen as concerned with the same themes throughout, but I find a differential approach more fruitful. For example, I take Wittgenstein to be concerned with *grammar* throughout his philosophical works, but having said that, laying the emphasis on the differences within that single continuum is what marks the turning points of his thought and the milestones of his contributions to philosophy.

11. This is not the only claim to fame of *On Certainty*, or the only reason for distinguishing a *third* Wittgenstein. In the conclusion of the book, I recapitulate the reasons for the importance of *On Certainty*. As to the justification for a *third* Wittgenstein, see the Introduction to Moyal-Sharrock (2004).
12. As Baker and Hacker note of Wittgenstein's work in the thirties and mid-forties: 'Wittgenstein gave a similar account [to that of grammatical propositions] of formulations of logical and "metaphysical" *impossibilities*, e.g. "Nothing can be red and green all over" or "I cannot travel backwards in time." Such metaphysical propositions containing "cannot" and "impossible" hide grammatical rules' (1992, 270); and Hacker: '*Metaphysical propositions* appear to describe the *necessary* features of the world. They look like *super-empirical descriptions* of reality. But in fact they are either expressions of grammatical rules for the use of words or nonsense. … The apparently *metaphysical propositions* "Nothing can be red and green all over simultaneously", "White is lighter than black", are expressions of rules for the use of colour names' (1989, 197–8; my emphasis); what appears to be a *metaphysical* statement about the *essential* nature of something, and what, in the *Tractatus*, he had taken to be ill-formed, is in fact an expression of a norm of representation (1996, 95; my emphasis).
13. Crispin Wright concurs: 'What is novel in *On Certainty* is the extension of [the suggestion that such propositions are best viewed as rules] to propositions outside logic and mathematics, propositions which we should not normally deem to be capable of being known a priori but which have instead, as Wittgenstein says, the appearance of empirical propositions' (1985, 452–3).
14. Brian McGuinness rightly points out: 'the most surprising new element in *On Certainty*, namely that Wittgenstein there includes in our *Vor-Wissen* some things which on any other view would be contingent truths' (1972, 238).
15. As concerns Cartesian scepticism, doubt about the reliability of the senses is the first of what John Cottingham calls the twelve 'successive waves of doubt' which engulf Descartes (1986, 29). Cottingham notes that Descartes distinguished between the 'order of exposition' and the 'order of discovery' in his arguments (1986, 48 and 73n2). The fact that (in the order of discovery) he first allays doubt about his own existence (and the ideas within him) does not imply that (in the order of exposition), doubt about the reliability of the senses was not the basic premise or assumption. I am not interested in the *conclusions* of Descartes's meditations, but in the *starting-point* of his sceptical journey.

16. 'Whatever I have up till now accepted as most true I have acquired either from the senses or through the senses. But from time to time I have found that the senses deceive, and it is prudent never to trust completely those who have deceived us even once' (1641, 12); 'I will suppose then, that everything I see is spurious. I will believe that my memory tells me lies, and that none of the things that it reports ever happened. I have no senses' (1641, 16).
17. Peter Hacker's gloss of two seemingly inconsistent passages in *Zettel* ('There is something right about saying that unimaginability is a criterion of nonsensicality' and 'That one can "imagine" something does not mean that it makes sense to say it' (Z 263, 250)) is enlightening. Although Wittgenstein does not equate imaginability with possibility, Hacker notes that: 'There is indeed *a* use of "I can't imagine …" in connection with the limits of what is logically possible. But in such cases, e.g. "I can't imagine something being both red and green all over simultaneously", it is not a psychological statement about the limits of one's powers of imagination. For to reply, "Well, try again next week" or "Maybe you will be able to do it when you are older" would be wholly inappropriate. One cannot even *try* to imagine it, because there is nothing there to imagine' (1996, 87).
18. This should not be confused with Michael Williams's position, discussed at the beginning of this chapter. To say that there are suitable and unsuitable situations for doubt is not to say that there is *ever* a suitable situation (such as philosophical reflection) for doubting our hinges. Again, philosophical or, indeed, scientific *consideration* of them does not amount to doubting them. I can envisage never having to grow old; and indeed, engage in the quest for a potion for everlasting youth, but this does not mean that I am putting in question the hinge 'Humans grow old'; indeed, my whole endeavour revolves on its standing fast for me.
19. See G.H. von Wright: 'Consider for example the proposition that I have two hands. It would sometimes be said, I think, that it is based on the evidence of my senses (Cf. Moore, "Certainty", p. 243). But this is not, as a general statement, correct'; '… the implicit trust which under normal circumstances I have that I have two hands is *not* founded on "the evidence of my senses" ' (Cf. § 125) (1982, 170, 171).
20. I speak of fictional propositions as true or false in accordance with Kendall Walton's conception of *fictional truths and falsehoods* (1990, 398), or of truth and falsehood, *fictionally speaking*. This allows for the qualification of such fictional propositions as 'Tom Sawyer attended his own funeral' as justified and true, and of 'Tom Sawyer never played hooky' as unjustified and false. Gareth Evans speaks of 'make-believe truths' (1982, 366) and justifies this in the following way: 'make-believe games which take place against a backdrop of shared information permit the make-believe occurrence of the kind of referential communication which is secured by the normal information-invoking use of singular terms' (1982, 361).
21. That is: 'logical' in the traditional, not in the Wittgensteinian sense (equivalent to grammatical).
22. A discussion of madness as the only justification for a *genuine* sceptical stance follows in the section, 'The delusion of doubt' in Chapter 8.
23. Philosophers have variously attempted to invalidate obsessive doubt by invoking not *grammaticality* as such, but aprioriticity and analyticity (e.g. Davidson's observation that we 'dismiss a priori the chance of massive error' (1974, 169); Austin's: ' "You cannot fool all of the people all of the time" is "analytic" ' (1946, 113)).
24. Moyal-Sharrock (2003) is an early version of this section.

25. (2002, 40). He also writes: ' "Pragmatism", as I understand and shall use the term, is a generic expression that picks out a family of views asserting various senses in which practice and the practical may be taken to deserve explanatory pride of place' (2002, 41).
26. 'Pragmatism can be thought of narrowly: as a philosophical school of thought centered on evaluating beliefs by their tendency to promote success and the satisfaction of wants, whose paradigmatic practitioners were the classical American triumvirate of Charles Peirce, William James and John Dewey' (2002, 41).
27. Hilary Putnam holds a similar view, suggesting in his *Pragmatism: An Open Question*, that 'even if Wittgenstein was not in the strict sense … a "pragmatist" … he shares … a central – perhaps the central – emphasis with pragmatism: the *emphasis* on the primacy of practice' (1995, 52). Also, Putnam sees the combination of anti-scepticism and fallibilism as pragmatism's most distinctive feature. On this reading, Wittgenstein would be an exemplary pragmatist: a fallibilist about knowledge (OC 12), he is also, as Avrum Stroll puts it, an 'arch anti-sceptic' (1998, 17).
28. C.I. Lewis might be thought to have anticipated Wittgenstein, particularly in his 'A Pragmatic Conception of the A Priori', but Lewis belongs to the narrow line of pragmatism; it isn't that the *a priori* is enacted, but that it is pliant to 'alteration on pragmatic grounds': 'through all our knowledge runs the element of the *a priori*, which is indeed malleable to our purpose and responsible to our need' (1922, 239). With respect to Peirce, who is Wittgenstein's closest precursor, Arnold Johanson notes that, whereas both Peirce and Wittgenstein 'agree in that their indubitables are part of a basic, primitive system of action in the world', for Peirce, these are not, as they are for Wittgenstein, part of the supporting framework of the belief system, but 'built so solidly into the system because they are true' (1994, 181, 182).
29. For example, Read and Guetti (1999) passim; Conant (1998), 244–50; Witherspoon (2000), 325–33.
30. See the section, '*Foundational*: hinges do not result from justification' in Chapter 4.
31. After all, if the following are not substantial philosophical positions which, *pace* Wittgenstein, *can* be disagreed with, what is? – 'meaning is use' (cf. PI 43), 'words are also deeds' (PI 546), 'The *truth* of certain empirical propositions belongs to our frame of reference' (OC 83), 'At the foundation of well-founded belief lies belief that is not founded' (OC 253). As to Wittgenstein's alleged refutation of theses, especially in PI 128, he is merely emphasizing in this passage the point he was making in PI 126 and will continue making in PI 129, namely the non-hermeneutic and uncontroversial aspect of philosophical endeavour, and of its elucidations. Although 'the aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden', they are so 'because of their simplicity and familiarity', and once brought forwards by *perspicuous presentation*, no one can help but 'be struck by what, *once seen*, is most striking and most powerful' (PI 129). All that philosophy does, through its highlighting aspects of the obvious via rearrangement and comparison is bring us to recognize the previously unrecognized obvious. This is not to say that Wittgenstein was averse to theses, but that he did not believe philosophical theses were subject to question, as scientific hypotheses are. In fact, if anything, a certain dogmatism rather than liberalism might be suspected here.
32. OC 34, 58–9, 94, 103, 105, 253.
33. OC 150, 283, 509. Indeed, Wittgenstein's move to disburden *Gewissheit* (certainty) of its Cartesian, rational, inferential baggage is discernible in his

frequent use of the more arational *Sicherheit* (assurance or sureness; see OC 77, 233, 308, 358 ff *inter alia*). I owe this point to Göran Sundholm. Wittgenstein also rejects the assimilation of our objective certainty to a reasoned, an inferred or temporal conclusion by comparing it to a spontaneous, unreasoned 'utterance' (OC 510).

34. In the next chapter, we shall see that the kind of trust in question here is a primitive, nonconscious trust, which we will call: 'ur-trust'.
35. Conflating imaginability and possibility is uncomfortably close to what demented individuals do. In the same issue of *Mind and Language*, Gregory Currie suggests that delusions might have their origin in a *misidentification of imagination*: 'Imagination is a cognitive tool of great power, but it is also potentially a rather dangerous one. Loss of the distinction between what is imagined and what is true, or seriously a candidate for truth, can be psychologically disastrous. … the schizophrenic patient is someone who has lost the distinction between what he or she imagines, and what he or she believes or experiences' (2000, 168, 174). Here again, the sceptic emerges as the innocuous counterpart of the neurotic: though she does not, like the schizophrenic, seriously confuse the product of her imagination and the object of her belief, the philosopher does conflate the possibility of imagining with the possibility of believing, or with the belief of possibility: If I can imagine that *p*, I can believe that *p*. What has to be recognized is that the possibility of conceiving or imagining something is not logically linked to the legitimacy of believing that something is possible. I discuss this below (the section, 'The illusion of possibility' in Chapter 8).
36. This of course does not mean to prohibit the philosophical use of thought experiments, only the systematic consideration of a fictional proposition as constituting a human possibility.
37. Hilary Putnam's excellent discussion of the nonintelligibility of sceptical scenarios makes this distinction. Although Putnam *appears* committed to denying the intelligibility, or rational meaningfulness, of sceptical scenarios *uberhaupt*, it is clear that he intends to deny their intelligibility *for us*: 'Talk of disembodied spirits, ghosts, etc., does, obviously, have the kind of intelligibility appropriate to myth; but that does not make such talk intelligible *if intended as factual description*' (1998, 247; my emphasis).
38. See the section, 'An inarticulate consensus' in Chapter 5.

9 Certainty as Trust: Belief as a Nonpropositional Attitude

1. This is of course the argument behind Fodor's *Language of Thought* (LOT) hypothesis. See for example, Fodor (1975), 56.
2. Which is not to say, as Michael Williams (2001, 35) does, that we could *justify* them when challenged.
3. Though the saying/speaking dichotomy which I have proposed in the section, 'Saying versus speaking' in Chapter 2 would require that the *formulation* of rules cannot technically be called 'saying'.
4. See Michel ter Hark's retracing of Darwin's influence on Wittgenstein in his '"*Patterns of Life*": a third Wittgenstein concept' in Moyal-Sharrock (2004).
5. As noted in the Introduction, 'primitive' is used, as Wittgenstein uses it, both in a *logical* sense, as indicating the place occupied by a type of reaction or utterance in relation to a language-game; and in an *anthropological* sense, as indicating the

place of a reaction in the life of a human being (ontogenetic) and in the history of the human species (phylogenetic).

6. And this, in spite of his attempt to do away with propositions in an early paper: 'Are there Propositions?' (1930, in CP II).
7. Similarly, Austin points out that one can say 'How do you know?', but not 'How do you believe?' (1946), pp. 77–9.
8. Curtis Brown suggests that Marcan Barcus's *states of affairs* 'might be considered to be something like sequences of actual objects and properties' (1991, 353).
9. In his study of *Belief, Language, and Experience*, Rodney Needham finds the excessive polysemy of 'belief', its 'scattered significances' (1972, 234), resulting in a lack of determining criteria that undermines it as a term of universal application (206). Belief, concludes Needham, 'does not constitute a natural resemblance among men, and it does not belong to "the common behaviour of mankind" ' (188).
10. For a discussion of this, see Mulligan (2003).
11. Certainly this was Aquinas's stance and that of the Catholic tradition which followed him: see Hick (1966, 12 ff.) and Swinburne (1981), 105 ff. Swinburne accepts this propositional view of faith (p. 124), Hick does not (Preface, n.p.).
12. According to Mulligan: 'The property of being valuable is a thin axiological property. The simplest view of the relation between such a property and the various thick, positive axiological properties – being useful, being tolerant, being generous – has it that the latter are determinates of the determinable property of being valuable. Thus the type of positive value involved in belief in can vary enormously' (2003, 2).
13. Indeed, Wittgenstein often refers to grammar as *method*: For example, 'What belongs to grammar are all the conditions (the *method*) necessary for comparing the proposition with reality. That is, all the conditions necessary for the understanding (of the sense)' (PG, p. 88; my emphasis), and in *On Certainty*: 'I should like to say: Moore does not *know* what he asserts he knows, but it stands fast for him, as also for me; regarding it as absolutely solid is part of our *method* of doubt and enquiry' (OC 151).
14. On Price's view, as we have seen: 'Trusting is an essential factor in all evaluative belief-in' (1969, 449).
15. I borrow this expression from O'Shaughnessy (1994), 209.
16. I have not found that Baier anywhere speaks of 'ur-trust', but only of 'ur-confidence' (1986, 110).
17. See *Zettel* 573: 'There is such a thing as trust and mistrust in behaviour! / If anyone complains, e.g., I may be trustful and react with perfect confidence, or I may be uncertain, like someone who has his suspicions. Neither words nor thoughts are needed for this' (my emphasis).
18. Actually, he speaks of the inconceivability of 'mistrusting' the statement that water boils at 100 °C – thereby implying trusting the statement.
19. See his Chapter 8, 'The idea of basic trust'.
20. John Hick points out that 'the dispositional analysis applies equally to believing in' (1966, 248).
21. I am aware of my equivalent use of both 'certainty' and 'belief', but only as part of the expressions 'hinge belief' and 'objective certainty', which indeed I do, at this point, consider to be equivalent.
22. 'There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They *make themselves manifest*. They are what is mystical' (TLP 6.522).

23. This is not meant to assimilate objective certainty, even in the slightest, to a kind of religious belief but only to make a rapprochement between some of its features and those of religious beliefs.
24. Credulity, according to Thomas Reid, is an instinct (*An Inquiry into the Human Mind*, 6.24).
25. Though it is not the kind of basic trust Anthony Giddens has in mind: a kind of 'ontological security' which is 'a crucial generic phenomenon of personality development', a failure of which leads to personality deformation such as narcissism (1991, 3, 66, 178).

Conclusion: No Gap to Mind

1. For example, 'The origin and the primitive form of the language game is a reaction; only from this can more complicated forms develop. Language – I want to say – is a refinement, "in the beginning was the deed" ' (CV 31); 'A child has hurt himself and he cries; and then adults talk to him and teach him exclamations and, later, sentences' (PI 244).
2. For example, 'Does someone crying out "Help!" want to describe how he is feeling? Nothing is further from his intentions than describing something' (LW I, 48).
3. For example, ' "*I know* what I want, wish, believe, feel, …" (and so on through all the psychological verbs) is either philosophers' nonsense, or at any rate *not* a judgement *a priori* ' (PI, p. 221; first emphasis mine); 'I can't be said to know that I have toothache if I can't be said not to know that I have toothache' (LPE 287).
4. 'Being sure that someone is in pain, doubting whether he is, and so on, are so many *natural, instinctive kinds of behaviour* towards other human beings … Our language-game is an extension of primitive behavior' (Z 545); 'a primitive reaction' (such as trying to tend and ease the painful place in another person's body) (Z 541) is 'the prototype of *a way of thinking* and not the result of thought' (Z 541, my emphasis).

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