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The ontology of the practice turn. Lessons still to be learnt from Heidegger and Wittgenstein. [MA-thesis]

Frank Scheppers

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The ontology of the practice turn.
Lessons still to be learnt from Heidegger and Wittgenstein.

Proeve ingediend voor het behalen van de graad van Master in de Wijsbegeerte en Moraalwetenschappen, afstudeerrichting Logica en Wetenschapsfilosofie

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Ik verklaar plechtig dat ik de masterproef *The ontology of the practice turn. Lessons still to be learnt from Heidegger and Wittgenstein* zelf heb geschreven. Ik ben op de hoogte van de regels i.v.m. plagiaat en heb erop toegezien om deze toe te passen in deze masterproef.

18 mei 2017

Frank Scheppers

Abstract

21st century practice-based approaches to Philosophy of Science and Philosophy of Mathematics can still benefit from the contributions made by Heidegger’s *Sein und Zeit* and Wittgenstein’s later work, in that both bodies of work constitute a much more radical implementation of the concept of ‘practice’ than is currently fashionable: both advocate a radically pragmatic and deeply holistic approach, in which agency and objecthood are understood in terms of their relevance within the structure of an encompassing practice. The present study also shows that in both bodies of work, the notion of ‘everydayness’ plays a crucial role, which is in its turn linked to an underlying critical agenda, centered on the concept of ‘authenticity’.

Key words

the Practice Turn - practices - Wittgenstein - Heidegger - holism - agency - objecthood - pragmatics - everydayness/ordinariness - authenticity

Korte samenvatting

Eenentwintigste-eeuwse benaderingen in de wetenschapsfilosofie en de filosofie van de wiskunde die zich baseren op het concept ‘praktijk’, kunnen nog steeds voordeel halen uit de bijdragen van Heideggers *Sein und Zeit* en Wittgensteins latere werk. Beide oeuvres vertegenwoordigen een veel radicalere invulling van het concept ‘praktijk’ dan tegenwoordig gebruikelijk is: beide staan voor een radicaal pragmatische en diep holistische benadering, waarbinnen agency en objectmatigheid begrepen worden in termen van hun relevantie binnen de structuur van overkoepelende praktijken. Deze studie toont tevens aan dat het begrip ‘allegaagsheid’ in beide oeuvres een cruciale rol speelt, wat op zijn beurt gelinkt is aan een onderliggende kritische agenda, gericht op het concept ‘authenticiteit’.

Trefwoorden

de pragmatische wending - praktijken - Wittgenstein - Heidegger - holisme - agency - objectmatigheid - pragmatiek - alledaagsheid - authenticiteit

Summary

The potential contributions of **Wittgenstein and Heidegger** -commonly considered **originators of the practice turn** in various branches of philosophy, the social sciences and beyond- have not been exhausted by their reception in the 20th century. Contemporary practice-based approaches to Philosophy of Science and Philosophy of Mathematics could still benefit from the contributions made by both bodies of work, in that both constitute a much more radical implementation of the concept of 'practice' than is currently fashionable:

- both advocate a **radically pragmatic** approach, in which agency and objecthood are understood in terms of their relevance within the context of a practice;
- both approaches are **deeply holistic**, in that practices are not reduced to either the cognition of an individual agent or to whatever constitutes a community, but -on the contrary- the relations between agents and the world are conceived of in terms of the internal structure of encompassing practices.

The study also shows that in both bodies of work, the notion of 'everydayness' plays a crucial role, which is in its turn linked to an underlying critical agenda, centered on the concept of 'authenticity'.

Underlying **Chapter 1** is a close reading of, and reflection on, selected passages that highlight the functions of the concepts of Language Game and Form of Life in Wittgenstein's later work, and their bearing on the issues surrounding the ontological status of practice. The conclusion is that Wittgenstein's work suggests a rather radically holistic conception of practice, at odds with both standard physicalism (in that it introduces contingency and fragmentation at the heart of ontology), and standard social-constructivism (in that the room for free choice is viewed as severely limited by the physical and biological dimensions that are equally part of our 'given' forms of life).

Chapter 2 presents a careful paraphrase of, and a number of critical reflections on, a few lines of thought in Heidegger's analysis of the structure of everyday 'In-der-Welt-sein' in *Sein und Zeit*, especially the 'pragmatic' lines of thought concerning the concepts of objecthood (the 'Vorhandenheit-Zuhandenheit' distinction) and agency ('Selbstsein', 'Mitsein' and 'das Man') and the problem of the transcendence of the world. The purpose is to show (1) the internal coherence and the philosophical relevance of these lines of thought, and especially their importance for contemporary practice-oriented work; (2) that Heidegger did not fully exploit the intrinsic potential of these lines of thought, due to certain biases in his phenomenological technique; and (3) that these biases are ultimately due to Heidegger's commitment to the notions of 'everydayness' and 'authenticity'.

Chapter 3 picks up the notions of 'everydayness' and 'authenticity', this time in the context of Wittgenstein's work. Starting point is the tension between (1) Wittgenstein's claim that philosophy "leaves everything as it is" (*Philosophische Untersuchungen* §124) and (2) the apparently critical strands in his work. This leads to a reflection on Wittgenstein's notion of sense (vs. nonsense) as embedding (vs. lack of embedding) in everyday practices and ultimately 'our life', which implies that the distinction between sense and nonsense is ultimately not an epistemic one. It is argued that the distinction between the everyday and the non-everyday (on which the sense-nonsense distinction hinges) is not a neutral/analytical one, but corresponds to an ethical/aesthetical concern with authenticity underlying Wittgenstein's philosophy. Wittgenstein's philosophy is thus inherently a critique of the Kantian type, reminding us of the fact that our formal epistemic practices ultimately can only be evaluated against the background of values and practices that are not themselves formal or even epistemic.

Samenvatting

Het potentieel van **Wittgenstein en Heidegger** -vaak geciteerd als bronnen voor **de pragmatische wending (practice turn)** in allerlei branches van de filosofie, de sociale wetenschappen en ver daarbuiten- werd niet ten volle uitgebuit door hun receptie in de twintigste eeuw. Hedendaagse benaderingen in de wetenschapsfilosofie en de filosofie van de wiskunde die zich baseren op het concept 'praktijk', kunnen nog steeds voordeel halen uit de bijdragen van beide oeuvres, die allebei een veel radicalere invulling van het concept 'praktijk' vertegenwoordigen dan vooralsnog gebruikelijk is:

- beide staan voor een **radicaal pragmatische benadering**, waarbinnen agency en objectmatigheid begrepen worden in termen van hun relevantie binnen een praktijk;
- beide benaderingen zijn diep **holistisch**, in die zin dat praktijken niet gereduceerd worden tot de cognitie van een individuele agens (noch tot de werking van een 'gemeenschap'); integendeel, de relaties tussen agentes en de wereld worden geconstrueerd in termen van de interne structuur van overkoepelende praktijken.

Voorliggende studie toont tevens aan dat in beide oeuvres de notie 'alledaagsheid' een cruciale rol speelt, wat op zijn beurt gelinkt is aan een onderliggende kritische agenda, gericht op het concept 'authenticiteit'.

Hoofdstuk 1 is gebaseerd op een grondige lectuur van, en reflectie op, geselecteerde passages die de functies van de concepten 'Sprachspiel' en 'Lebensform' in Wittgensteins latere werk in de verf zetten, alsook hun relevantie voor de problematiek van de ontologische status van het concept 'praktijk'. De conclusie is dat Wittgensteins werk een nogal radicale holistische opvatting van het concept 'praktijk' suggereert, die in strijd is met standaard fysicalisme én standaard sociaal-constructivisme.

Hoofdstuk 2 bestaat uit een zorgvuldige parafrase van, en een aantal kritische reflecties op, enkele gedachtenpistes binnen Heideggers analyse van de structuur van het alledaagse 'In-der-Welt-sein' in *Sein und Zeit*, met name de 'pragmatische' pistes i.v.m. de concepten objectmatigheid ('Vorhandenheit' vs. 'Zuhandenheit') en agency ('Selbstsein', 'Mitsein' en 'das Man'), alsmede de problematiek van de transcendentie van de wereld. Er wordt aangetoond dat (1) deze gedachtenpistes intern coherent, filosofisch relevant en van groot potentieel belang zijn voor hedendaags werk binnen de practice turn; (2) Heidegger zelf het intrinsiek potentieel van deze gedachtenpistes niet volledig geëxploiteerd heeft; en (3) de reden voor deze terughoudendheid te zoeken is in Heidegger's gehechtheid aan de tegenstelling alledaags vs. niet-alledaags en het concept 'authenticiteit' dat daarmee samenhangt.

Hoofdstuk 3 gaat verder in op de noties 'alledaagsheid' en 'authenticiteit', deze keer in de context van Wittgensteins werk. Het vertrekpunt is de spanning tussen (1) Wittgensteins claim dat filosofie 'alles laat zoals het is' (*Philosophische Untersuchungen* §124) en (2) kritische tendensen in zijn werk. Dit geeft aanleiding tot een reflectie op Wittgensteins visie op het concept 'zin' (vs. 'onzin') in termen van inbedding (vs. gebrek aan inbedding) in alledaagse praktijken en uiteindelijk 'ons leven'. Dit impliceert dat het onderscheid tussen zin en onzin uiteindelijk geen epistemisch onderscheid is. Er wordt aangetoond dat het onderscheid 'alledaags vs. niet-alledaags' (waarop het verschil tussen zin en onzin gebaseerd is) geen neutraal/analytisch onderscheid is, maar geworteld is in een op het concept 'authenticiteit' gebaseerde ethisch-esthetische agenda. Wittgensteins filosofie kan best gelezen worden als een soort van Kantiaanse kritiek, die ons herinnert aan het feit dat onze formele epistemische praktijken ultiem enkel kunnen beoordeeld worden in het licht van waarden en praktijken die zelf niet formeel en zelfs niet epistemisch zijn.

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Abbreviations

Wherever appropriate, I will use the following **abbreviations**:

LW = Ludwig Wittgenstein

MH = Martin Heidegger

LG = Language Game / Sprachspiel

FoL = Form of Life / Lebensform

S&Z = *Sein und Zeit / Being and Time*¹

PhU = *Philosophische Untersuchungen / Philosophical Investigations*²

PhPF = *Philosophie der Psychologie - Ein Fragment / Philosophy of Psychology - A Fragment*³

ÜG = *Über Gewißheit / On Certainty*

BGM = *Bemerkungen über die Grundlagen der Mathematik / Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*

BPhP1 = *Bemerkungen über die Philosophie der Psychologie. Band 1 / Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology. Volume 1*

BPhP2 = *Bemerkungen über die Philosophie der Psychologie. Band 2 / Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology. Volume 2*

VB = *Vermischte Bemerkungen / Culture and Value*

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¹ Quoted from Heidegger 1967.

² Except if mentioned otherwise I will quote Wittgenstein's original German texts from the classic editions prepared by his literary heirs, as published in the Suhrkamp *Werkausgabe*: Wittgenstein 1989a; Wittgenstein and Waismann 1989; Wittgenstein 1989b; Wittgenstein 1989c; Wittgenstein 1989d; Wittgenstein 1989e. For *PhU* and *PhPF* I consulted the 2009 Blackwell 4th edition (Wittgenstein 2009).

³ As of the 2009 edition *PhU* (Wittgenstein 2009), *PhPF* is the new title for what had -controversially- been published as Part II of *PhU*; I will also follow the new numbering into paragraphs.

General Introduction

The issues dealt with in the research presented in this thesis arise within the context of the so-called 'practice turn' in Philosophy of Science and Philosophy of Mathematics⁴ and concern the ontological status of 'practice' and its relations to such other key concepts as 'agency', 'objecthood', 'community/society', 'cognition', and 'knowledge'. The specific aim of this study will be to investigate how the bodies of work authored by Martin Heidegger (henceforward MH) and Ludwig Wittgenstein (LW), consistently quoted amongst the originators of this practice turn, can still contribute to contemporary accounts of these ontological issues.

1. Background 1: The practice turn and the ontology of practice

The term 'practice turn',⁵ made famous by the volume *The Practice Turn In Contemporary Theory* (Schatzki, Cetina, and von Savigny 2001), refers to the fact that the notion of 'practice' has taken up a central role in a variety of academic disciplines: "from philosophy, cultural theory, and history to sociology, anthropology, and science and technology studies" (Schatzki, Cetina, and von Savigny 2001:10).

This turn towards the concept 'practice' aims at offering alternative and more inclusive approaches to many classic (sometimes age-old) dichotomies and dualisms, which were felt to have become more of an obstacle to further understanding than useful tools: process vs. object, action vs. perception, individual vs. community, mind vs. world, subject vs. object, structure vs. agency, etc.

⁴ Due to the institutional setting within which this thesis is produced, there is a definite bias towards the way the issues manifest themselves in Philosophy of Science and Philosophy of Mathematics, but the topics dealt with are not limited to these domains, for instance: occasional references to developments in Philosophy of Mind, ethics and aesthetics, and even more 'existentialist' issues concerning the notion of 'authenticity', turned out to be unavoidable.

⁵ In previous work, I used the term 'pragmatic turn', but since the -somewhat barbaric- 'practice turn' appears to become standard usage, I followed course. As for terminology, it may be useful to point out that I will use the word 'pragmatic' in the general sense of 'pertaining to (human, intentional, meaningful,...) action or practice'. No particular reference to Pragmat(ic)ism (James, Peirce) is intended (though the choice of this name for these schools is of course not fortuitous either).

In the first place, i.e. as a baseline feature of all the approaches that participate in it, the pragmatic turn addresses a wider scope of phenomena than was previously the case: the attention is no longer only focused on static structures and finished products, but also on the actual processes that give rise to them, and the processes within which they manifest themselves as meaningful. Similarly, the focus in -for instance- Philosophy of Science is no longer only on purely epistemic issues, but now also takes into account the nuts and bolts of experimental practice, or the details of the social patterns underlying academic publication practices.

Next, the practice turn also implies various degrees of reworking the conceptual/theoretical frameworks involved. In this respect, the bodies of work that can be captured under the umbrella 'practice turn' by no means constitute a homogeneous 'school', as can be readily seen in such overviews as the recent volume *Science after the Practice Turn in the Philosophy, History, and Social Studies of Science* (Soler, Zwart, Lynch and Israel-Jost 2014), and very much so within the Philosophy of Mathematical Practice (see e.g. Van Kerkhove and Van Bendegem 2007; Mancosu 2008; Van Bendegem 2014). Some contributions that present themselves as practice-centered remain deeply rooted in a pre-pragmatic knowledge-based and object-based ontological framework (see e.g. Ferreirós 2015), whereas others present a full-blown practice-based ontology (e.g. Reckwitz 2002).⁶

The practice turn, apart from its immediate impact on the choice of phenomena that are deemed relevant, raises a number of **issues about the status of practice** itself, the status of agency and agents (various aspects of their cognitive and physiological make-up, but also their relation to the society/communit(y)(ies)/networks in which they function, etc.), the tools used, the products.

Many of these problems arise against the background of deep-rooted preconceptions. Thus, most research produced in standard Anglo-Saxon academic contexts operates within a framework that starts from elementary objects (typically physical ones - whatever 'physical' and 'elementary' may mean) and relations between those objects, and works its way up from there to accounts of more complex items. However, even for those for whom this standard picture corresponds to their metaphysical preferences, it is in actual practice highly problematic for the purposes of an analysis

⁶ One of the ways in which this heterogeneity manifests itself, is in the difference between those who think primarily of 'practice' as an uncountable (in general, as opposed to 'theory') vs. those who start from the countable 'a practice' (as opposed to 'another practice'). In sections 4.7 and 5.4 of chapter 1 and 2.5(2) and 6.1 of chapter 2, it is argued that practice (in general) is inherently heterogeneous and fragmented into many practices.

of actual human action in terms of practices. Even within neuro-cognitive approaches, one would have to account for the all-pervasive normative aspects and the 'intentionality'/'aboutness' that characterizes the relations between the contents of our cognition and the outside world (Hurley 1998). These problems therefore also gave rise to neuro-based approaches that hark back to various brands of phenomenology in order to construe a 'not only in the brain' account (Wheeler 2005; Gallagher 2005; Gallagher and Zahavi 2008; Noë 2004).⁷ In any case, even if one chooses to remain agnostic about the metaphysics, the standard picture is not unproblematic at the descriptive level: de facto, i.e. in the actual practice of analysis, it is of no help for the description of even the simplest everyday phenomena.

2. Background 2: Wittgenstein and Heidegger

My choice for focusing on both Wittgenstein and Heidegger perhaps requires some justification, especially within a program centered on 'Logic and Philosophy of Science', firmly rooted in Anglo-Saxon, analytical, empiricist and positivistic traditions:

- Of both authors under scrutiny, LW is the less alien to these Anglo-Saxon, analytical, empiricist and positivistic traditions, through both his reported links with logical positivism and his (arguable?) influence on the 'Ordinary Language' phase within the analytical tradition.⁸
- Whereas at least part of Heidegger-scholarship (especially American Heideggerians such as Hubert Dreyfus, Taylor Carman, and Charles Guignon) has included (some interpretation of) LW in the background of their interpretative activities, most of Wittgenstein-scholarship identified more readily with the so-called analytical tradition, which has often been overtly hostile to the

⁷ I am grateful to Marc Van den Bossche for having introduced me to this literature. Even if the confines of the present study do not allow me to make this explicit, it did help shaping the general outlook behind the research.

⁸ Still, the relationship between LW and analytical philosophy has always been an uneasy one. As a matter of fact, the readings offered in chapters 1 and (especially) 3 may even help establishing that the influence of LW on the analytical tradition -though its historical importance is undeniable-, was mostly based on misunderstandings. Similarly, LW's influence on various avatars of the practice turn has often taken the shape of some kind of social-constructivism, which is a blatant misunderstanding, as well (see section 2.6 and 5.3 of chapter 1 for more on this issue).

arch-continental nonsense of MH and his followers.⁹ This predicament seems to be changing, though (see below).

However, I would not be the first to point out that reading MH can shed light on the works of LW and vice versa: mentioning MH and LW together has occasionally happened ever since the 1950s,¹⁰ but has recently become more fashionable, as is -for instance- witnessed by the following contributions:

- Braver, Lee. 2012. *Groundless Grounds: A Study of Wittgenstein and Heidegger*. Cambridge (Mass.) - London, M.I.T. (Braver 2012);
- a full volume under the title *Wittgenstein and Heidegger* (Egan, Reynolds, and Wendland 2013), consisting in a collection of essays by 15 different scholars.

Building on this work, as well as on my own BA-paper (Scheppers 2008a), I hope that the contents of this thesis will be able to contribute to this emerging field.

More important than the historical interest in comparing both authors and their backgrounds is perhaps the fact that reading both authors alongside each other throws light on *both* bodies of work, and considerably helps us understanding their (potential) contributions to a number of philosophical topics. Throughout this study, it is my contention that the potential impact of both LW and MH is far from being exhausted by their 20th century reception, especially within the domains in which this thesis is primarily situated, both institutionally and intellectually, i.e. Philosophy of Science and Philosophy of Mathematics.

3. Research questions

Starting from the literature associated with the practice turn, it quickly becomes clear that the introduction of the notion of 'practice' in the various domains involved, does not resolve all the conceptual tensions, on the contrary: the 'new' framework not only inherits a number of old tensions (structure vs. process, subject vs. object, individual vs. community, ...), but gives rise to new ones as well. The present research is motivated by the aim to tackle these issues frontally, at the level of the underlying ontology.

⁹ For a more or less recent example of this hostility, see Herman Philipse's well-researched but basically malevolent and grossly uncharitable *Heidegger's Philosophy of Being: A Critical Interpretation* (Philipse 1998).

¹⁰ A small selection: Goff 1968; Murray 1974; Guignon 1990; Dreyfus 1991; Rorty 1993; Schatzki 1993a; Schatzki 1993b; Olafson 1994; Cooper 1997; Stern 2000; Minar 2001; Mulhall 2001; Livingston 2003; Stern 2003; Cahill 2004; Rorty 2005; Weston 2010; Guignon 2013.

At the most general level, the supertopic of my research can thus be summarized by the question as to what is the ontological status of the notion of 'practice' and how it relates to other key concepts such as 'agency', 'objecthood', 'community/society', 'cognition' and 'knowledge'.¹¹ Within the contemporary literature, various choices have been made in this respect, perhaps with equal a priori legitimacy. However, not all conceptions are compatible with each other, and each choice has consequences for what can be coherently expressed, for instance:

- a framework in which practices are a priori viewed as the attribute of a community, will be blind to the issue as to *whether* it makes sense to speak of a community of agents in this or that particular case (cf. chapter 1 section 4.7; see e.g. Scollon 2001; for a rather spectacular ethnolinguistic demonstration of this point, see Van Mensel 2014);
- frameworks in which objecthood is primarily defined in physical terms will have difficulties to conceive of mathematical or otherwise epistemic objects (Ferreirós 2015, Chapter 9; Chang 2011), whereas for frameworks in which objecthood is defined in functional/pragmatic terms, materiality is an issue that has to be dealt with (Schatzki 2010);
- cognitive approaches (e.g. based in neurology) will be ipso facto agent-centered, but will have a hard time integrating the intrinsic normativity of cognitive contents (cf. Hurley 1998; see also section 5.2 of chapter 1 below); etc.¹²

This is then the very wide context within which my research is situated and from which it takes its relevance.

For the present thesis, I chose to begin to address these ontological issues by investigating how they manifest themselves in the works of LW and MH, qua originators of the practice-based approaches. Throughout this study, my research will address the following main research question:

What can be learnt from Wittgenstein and Heidegger with respect to the issue of the ontological status of 'practice' and its relation to concepts such as 'agency', 'objecthood', 'community/society', 'cognition' and 'knowledge' within the context of

¹¹ At the level of our research questions, this list of potentially relevant concepts is merely indicative and inherently open-ended, in that their relevance ultimately depends on the results of the investigation. The heterogeneity of the various frameworks within the practice turn (as discussed above) also precludes any attempt at formulating a closed list a priori.

¹² Many of these issues boil down to the typical problems of reductionism (cf. chapter 1, section 5.1 below).

the practice turn in contemporary Philosophy of Science and Philosophy of Mathematics?

I kept the initial formulation of the question deliberately 'open' and allowed my research to develop in several directions out of the confrontation between (1) LW's and MH's texts and (2) the encompassing research topic. Thus, a number of sub-topics emerged. Most notably, it turned out that the notions of 'everydayness' and 'authenticity' played a crucial role in both LW's and MH's work, which lead me to a further investigation into the role of these aspects.

4. Methodology and corpus

As can be expected in view of the research questions formulated above, the present thesis is mostly based on a close reading of MH's and LW's original texts, as well a selection of the secondary literature. In this section, I will briefly account for the ways I navigated through the literature, made selections and processed my notes into the present text.

4.1 Methodology

The present study is based on *reading*, and as such shows a methodologically speaking deceptively basic, but practically speaking rather intricate process. Suffice it to highlight the following features, which characterize the present study methodologically:

- The focus is always on those concepts, issues and lines of thought that are relevant within the context of the research questions described in the above, rather than on the exegesis of the texts under scrutiny for their own sake.
- Still, I am always concerned with the internal logic of the original texts/contexts and will try to be careful in keeping separate my account of what is said in the texts themselves on the one hand, and my own critical reflections on the other.
- Similarly, I allow the argument to go wherever it will go, i.e. I have no particular desire to read my own agenda into the works under scrutiny: if whatever LW or MH argue for, turns out to fit my agenda, that is fine, if not, even better.¹³

¹³ As a matter of fact, my account of both authors turned out a lot more critical of them, but also a lot more rewarding, than I had expected at the outset.

- As for the processing of my reading notes into the present thesis, I allowed the lines of thought to ‘gel’ in an organic way; this process gave rise to three, relatively stand-alone, chapters, each with its own stylistic personality (adapted to its contents), but thematically connected by the underlying research questions.

4.2 Primary and secondary literature

In this study, I will mostly focus on the works of LW and MH (for a justification of this choice see section 2 above). Both authors left considerable and quite heterogeneous bodies of work and are among the most studied philosophical authors of all times, each generating a continuously expanding exegetical literature, of increasingly high levels of intricacy and technicality, as well as a heterogeneous bulk of secondary literature that is not strictly exegesis, but re-use etc. (for the different types of reception of LW's work, see Biletzki 2003). In order to deal with the vastness of the literature, especially within the constraints imposed on a MA-thesis, I limit my focus to a selection of (1) influential classics (e.g. Janik and Toulmin 1973; Kripke 1982; Baker and Hacker 2005; Baker and Hacker 2009; Dreyfus 1991); (2) currently popular and relatively recent manuals/companions/readers as representatives of the status quaestionis (e.g. Dreyfus and Wrathall 2005; Guignon 2006; Wrathall 2013; Glock and Hyman 2017); (3) various publications on more topical issues. Even then I was able to include (let alone discuss) only a fraction of the literature I consulted.

In the context of the research questions formulate above, and in view of the restrictions imposed on this exercise, I am primarily concerned with the primary texts of LW and MH and refrain from discussing the secondary literature unless such a discussion directly shed light on the issues at hand.

Literature concerning Heidegger

As for MH, I will almost exclusively **focus on *Sein und Zeit*** (Heidegger 1967 [1927]), and especially on the chapters dealing with the analysis of the structure of everyday ‘In-der-Welt-sein’, more precisely those concerned with (1) objecthood, (2) agency and sociality, and (3) the transcendence of the world. Within the vast secondary literature devoted to Heidegger-scholarship and -exegesis, I concentrate mostly on Anglo-Saxon contributions (Dreyfus, Guignon, Carman and Wrathall are among the names that come to mind),¹⁴ as this body of work often has a starting point and a

¹⁴ See the bibliographical references for some of their works.

basic attitude to research that is more akin to the one I adopt here than the so-called ‘continental’ Heideggerian traditions.

Literature concerning Wittgenstein

As for LW, a few threads running through the whole of his work will be taken into account, but the focus will be on his **later work**,¹⁵ as published under titles such as *Bemerkungen über die Philosophie der Psychologie. Band 1* and *Band 2* (BPhP1 and BPhP2); *Bemerkungen über die Grundlagen der Mathematik* (BGM); *Philosophische Untersuchungen* (PhU); *Über Gewißheit* (ÜG). To a lesser extent, I will refer to *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (TLP) and previous versions of the materials that later became the seminal edition of PhU, such as the *Blue Book*.¹⁶

The secondary literature on Wittgenstein is as vast and diverse as it gets (cf. Biletzki 2003) and -again- it was not possible to systematically integrate it in this thesis, beyond references to the status quaestionis (as represented by recent manuals, such as Kuusela and McGinn 2011 or Glock and Hyman 2017) and discussion of a few more punctual matters whenever appropriate.

¹⁵ This purely descriptive use of the term ‘later’ is not intended to imply any endorsement of a clear-cut periodization of LW’s philosophical development (cf. Stern 2006).

¹⁶ For the editions used, see the section titled *Abbreviations*, above.

Chapter 1. The freezing point of water.

Practices as holistic structures and the ontology of the practice turn (lessons still to be learnt from Wittgenstein)

Starting point for this chapter is the fact that LW is universally considered one of the originators of the practice turn, and that his reflections in terms of 'Language Game' (LG), 'Form of Life' (FoL) and similar notions can be seen as precursors to still current issues formulated in terms of the notion of 'practice'. Underlying the present chapter is a close reading of, and reflection on, selected passages that highlight the functions of LG and FoL in LW's later work. However, my purpose is not in the first place exegetical, but regards the issues surrounding the ontological status of practice as introduced in section 3 of the General Introduction: I look into how LW conceptualizes the relations between the various dimensions involved in Language Games, Forms of Life, and related avatars of the notion of 'practice'. The conclusion is that LW's work suggests a rather radical holism about these issues.

1. Language Games

1.1 What kinds of things are called 'Language Games'?

The notion 'Sprachspiel' occurs first in the *Blue Book* (1933-1934) to refer to simplified games that LW introduces to make a specific point, but the denotation of the term can easily be expanded to cover real-life patterns, as well as imaginary, exotic, and/or counterfactual games (cf. Rowe 1998:450).

PhU §23 shows what kind of things LW has in mind when he speaks of Language Games:

PhU §23:

Befehlen, und nach Befehlen handeln – Beschreiben eines Gegenstands nach dem Ansehen, oder nach Messungen – Herstellen eines Gegenstands nach einer Beschreibung (Zeichnung) – Berichten eines Hergangs – Über den Hergang Vermutungen anstellen – Eine Hypothese aufstellen und prüfen – Darstellen der Ergebnisse eines Experiments durch Tabellen und Diagramme – Eine Geschichte erfinden; und lesen – Theater spielen – Reigen singen – Rätsel

raten – Einen Witz machen; erzählen – Ein angewandtes Rechenexempel lösen – Aus einer Sprache in die andere übersetzen – Bitten, Danken, Fluchen, Grüßen, Beten.

This list on its own allows us to see that most of these behavioral patterns cannot be understood as strictly verbal/linguistic. While some of the LGs (such as ‘reporting an event’, ‘telling a joke’ or ‘translating’) may be more or less purely linguistic, verbal and non-verbal aspects are equally essential to ‘giving and obeying orders’. It is remarkable that a number of these patterns do not necessarily imply language use at all: ‘construct an object by means of a picture’, ‘solve an applied math problem’, ‘play-acting’. This observation shows why the notion of LG can be viewed as a precursor of the notion of practice in general.

1.2 The ‘Language’ in ‘Language Game’

This leads us to the question as to why the notion of ‘language’ is so prominent in both the name of ‘language game’ and the perception of LW’s work in the (especially older) literature.

For a long time LW has been read as an exponent of the ‘**linguistic turn**’, but that only means that he dealt with apparent philosophical problems in terms of the meaning of key terms/words. If we take a closer look at what he actually has to say about language, it becomes clear that the main turn is towards looking at language in terms of the functions of utterances within encompassing activities, and ultimately ‘our lives’. The net result is one of attributing *less* importance to the strictly linguistics aspects of language, of viewing language as a mere part of our ‘nature’ and of ‘our lives’, alongside -say- the chemical aspects of our organism and its environment (see section 4 below).¹⁷

LW’s later philosophy was *wrongly* understood as a ‘philosophy of language’ from the beginning, as becomes clear from the following report of LW’s lectures in the years 1930-1933 by G.E. Moore:

[...] he held that though the "new subject" must say a great deal about language, it was only necessary for it to deal with those points about language which have led, or are likely to lead, to definite philosophical puzzles or errors. I think he certainly thought that some philosophers now-a-days have been misled into dealing with linguistic points which have no such bearing,

¹⁷ This appears to still not be universally understood: see e.g. the way the differences between Popper and LW are understood in terms of the role of language in Edmonds and Eidinow 2001, especially chapter 18 ‘The Problem with Puzzles’.

and the discussion of which therefore, in his view, forms no part of the proper business of a philosopher.

(Moore 1955:27)

1.3 The 'Game' in 'Language Game'

In what follows, I will try to account for the implications of LW's choice for the term 'game': the term 'game' (or rather: 'Spiel')¹⁸ as such already suggests a number of attributes that we can expect to resonate in LW's use of the word LG/'Sprachspiel'.¹⁹

(a) activity / practice

A game is inherently an activity. It requires at least one agent, but often more than one. It also is inherently dynamic: several actions follow each other in time.

(b) rules / normativity

The notion of 'game' as such suggests that there are -more or less explicit- rules, or -more generally- that the behavioral patterns that make up a game cannot be understood in terms of pure causality, but essentially imply criteria of correctness: within a game we can do things the wrong way.

This normative aspect is as such an important theme within *PhU*, as has become very clear after the debates about the notion of rule-following launched by Kripke's classic *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language: An Elementary Exposition* (Kripke 1982). The exact status of rules with respect to language games, agents and communities is the heart of the matter in these debates.

(c) boundaries

Any actual game is typically delimited by clear boundaries:²⁰

- (i) all (experienced) participants are aware of which actions belong to the game and which actions don't, and of which actions *can* belong to the game and which cannot; it is usually also very clear when the game starts and when it stops;²¹

¹⁸ The English word 'game' does not have exactly the same extension as the German word 'Spiel', which would include certain uses of 'play' on top of the ones covered by 'game'. (And vice versa: some aspects of the meaning of 'game', such as (obviously) "wild animals hunted for sport" are not covered by "Spiel").

¹⁹ LW has famously dealt with the concept of game in his own work (i.a. *PhU* §§65-71), and there may be a link between the prominence of the concept in his reflections on meaning and his interest in the concept for its own sake. Here, however, I am not focusing on LW's specific analysis the notion of 'game' as such, but in the various aspects of the everyday term 'game' that play a role in the philosophical issues surrounding LW's notion of LG. LW's own analyses may be relevant to this purpose, but not exclusively and not primarily so.

²⁰ This aspect is prominently emphasized throughout Huizinga's classic *Homo ludens* (Huizinga 1938).

(ii) most games are also finite/bounded in the sense that all players know which aspects of the game are part of the rules and therefore simply 'given' and perhaps to be referred to but not negotiated within the game itself (though cases can be imagined and even sometimes observed, in which this does happen).²²

These aspects are obviously related to normativity: the criteria that determine what belongs to the game and what doesn't are a matter of 'norms' and not of 'objective causality'.

(d) iterativity / token-type

A game is a behavioral pattern that - at least in principle, but most of the time also in actual practice- is recurrent and in which many aspects remain stable across token occurrences.²³

In connection with this aspect, the issue of agency and mimesis arises: it is evident that a large part of what we do when we play a certain game, is determined by our 'role' in this game (and not, for instance, by our individual personalities or moods). This is also the point of LW's use of the notion of LG to construe the notorious 'private language argument', in which he shows that it ultimately is not possible to make sense of actions (including discourse) in terms of the individual.

(e) cultural determination / historical contingency

The normativity of a game as such already implies that it is a cultural artifact, and therefore (among other things) the product of a history. At the same time, this also implies that we cannot expect games to be necessarily universal. LW emphasizes this aspect quite profusely, often by invoking (typically fictional) foreign cultures or primitive tribes (see section 4.7 below).

²¹ Games often mark their beginnings and endings in a ritualized way (gong, gun shot, 'ready! steady! go!', countdown, explicit discussion of the rules and/or distribution of roles (e.g. in children's pretend games), ...). Also note that this may be a ritualized version of a basic tripartite structural pattern <preparation - actual activity - coda>, underlying many (if not all) everyday activities. Cf. Jackendoff 2007, chapter 4 "Shaking Hands and Making Coffee: The Structure of Complex Actions", esp. pp.117 seqq.; Scheppers 2011:275; 312-313.

²² Cf. the game 'calvinball' in Bill Watterson's comics 'Calvin and Hobbes', in which "the only consistent rule is that Calvinball may never be played with the same rules twice" (cf. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calvin_and_Hobbes#Calvinball [last accessed 20170517]). Cf. LW's remarks on 'making up the rules as we go along' (*PhU* §83). Note that 'calvinball' gets its comical point from the fact that games inherently have rules: this game (perhaps more than 'normal' games) presupposes and thematizes the fundamental normativity underlying any game. I have to thank Koen Vermeir for making me aware of the existence and the philosophical relevance of Calvinball.

²³ Cf. *ÜG* §519(c): "Da aber ein Sprachspiel etwas ist, was in wiederholten Spielhandlungen in der Zeit besteht, [...]".

(f) other aspects

The notion of ‘game’ also presents other aspects, which, however, are not directly related to the philosophical issues that interest us here, for instance:

- a large array of games is about ‘winning or losing’ (though by no means all games);²⁴
- other connotations of the notion of the German word ‘Spiel’ (that covers not only the field of the English word ‘game’, but also the English ‘play’) include the oppositions with ‘real life’ or ‘serious business’ (cf. e.g. children’s games, but also ‘acting’).²⁵

2. Beyond the Language Game: Forms of Life (and similar notions)

When speaking of LGs, LW often also refers what -in a sense that needs to be specified (see section 4 below)- lies ‘beyond’ the simple LG. In this section, I will try to offer a succinct but panoramic tour of the ways in which LW implements this idea. The term that most famously covers this notion of ‘beyond the LG’ and in the literature has been treated as a quasi-technical term and a key concept in LW’s approach, despite its very low frequency in LW’s oeuvre, is ‘**Lebensform**’/‘**Form of Life**’ (see e.g. Baker and Hacker 2009:218–223; Hacker 2015; Moyal-Sharrock 2015). The word ‘Lebensform’ as such occurs only 7 times in LW’s writings as represented in the standard editions (*PhU* §19, §23 and §241; *PhPF* i §1 and xi §345; *BPhP1* §630; *ÜG* §358).²⁶

As a practical starting point within the context of our ‘panoramic tour’, I will examine these 7 excerpts, highlighting those aspects that are relevant to the purposes

²⁴ LW famously emphasized that no single explicit criterion is sufficient to define the concept of ‘game’ in such a way that all games are covered by the definition (cf. the ‘family resemblances’ theme). This is of course not a specific feature of the notion of ‘game’, but of our cognition in general: a similar point can be made about the notions ‘chair’, ‘vegetable’, or ‘number’.

²⁵ The latter aspect may have played a role when LW chose the term Language Game within the context in which it first occurred, i.e. to denote the kind of simple games that we play to teach children the meaning of a certain word (see (a) here above).

²⁶ Baker and Hacker add two cases from the manuscripts that do not appear in the standard editions, plus a reference to *Philosophical Occasions*, but do not mention *BPhP1* §630 (Baker and Hacker 2005:74–75; see also more recent contributions, e.g. by P.M.S. Hacker (Hacker 2015) and Anna Boncompagni (Boncompagni 2015), for a few more relevant excerpts from the Nachlaß.

of this study. So as to also cover a few aspects that happen to not occur in these excerpts, I also include *ÜG* §559, which does not contain the word 'Lebensform', but does contain the equivalent expression 'unser Leben' in combination with 'Sprachspiel', and *BPhP2* §629 (=Zettel §567), which contains the notion of 'Handlungsweise' (semantically close to our notion of practice but in a role close to FoL) and highlights yet other aspects. I number these passages #1 to #9, for the sake of ease of reference in what follows.

2.1 Excerpt #1. *PhU* §19: eine Sprache vorstellen heißt, sich eine Lebensform vorstellen

Man kann sich leicht eine Sprache vorstellen, die nur aus Befehlen und Meldungen in der Schlacht besteht. – Oder eine Sprache, die nur aus Fragen und einem Ausdruck der Bejahung und der Verneinung besteht. Und unzählige Andere. – Und eine Sprache vorstellen heißt, sich eine Lebensform vorstellen. [...]

LW appears to say that **every language as such already refers to a Form of Life**, which suggests that a language cannot be understood outside the context of something more encompassing (which is here called a 'Form of Life').

This is the first time that the concept occurs within *PhU*, and the meaning of the term should therefore be transparent. I retain the following aspects:

1. The word 'FoL' inherently implies the notion of 'life', which may denote a purely '**biological**' function (cf. #7 below), but also a more **human-existential** aspect, according to which 'our life' is probably the most irreducible thing there is.²⁷
2. The word is here used in the singular form and with an indeterminate article; this suggests that LW in principle assumes that **there are several different FoLs**; the context implies a contrast between the FoL of the people that use the 'primitive' (limited and simple) languages and our own FoL.

2.2 Excerpt #2. *PhU* §23: Sprachspiel - Tätigkeit - Lebensform

Wieviele Arten der Sätze gibt es aber? Etwa Behauptung, Frage und Befehl? – Es gibt *unzählige* solcher Arten: unzählige verschiedene Arten der Verwendung alles dessen, was wir »Zeichen«, »Worte«, »Sätze«, nennen. Und diese Mannigfaltigkeit ist nichts Festes, ein für allemal Gegebenes; sondern neue Typen der Sprache, neue Sprachspiele, wie wir sagen können, entstehen und andre veralten und werden vergessen. (Ein *ungefähres* Bild davon können uns die Wandlungen der Mathematik geben.)

²⁷ The word has this meaning in 'normal' German. Cf. Hacker 2015:1-3.

Das Wort »Sprachspiel« soll hier hervorheben, daß das Sprechen der Sprache ein Teil ist einer Tätigkeit, oder einer Lebensform. Führe dir die Mannigfaltigkeit der Sprachspiele an diesen Beispielen, und anderen, vor Augen: [*hereafter follows the list of Language Games already quoted in section 1.1*].

- Es ist interessant, die Mannigfaltigkeit der Werkzeuge der Sprache und ihrer Verwendungsweisen, die Mannigfaltigkeit der Wort- und Satzarten, mit dem zu vergleichen, was Logiker über den Bau der Sprache gesagt haben. (Und auch der Verfasser der *Logisch-Philosophischen Abhandlung*).

This is the paragraph in which the notion of Language Game takes its proper shape for the first time in *PhU*, and already here the link with the concept of FoL is made. Interestingly, LW explicitly states that the very **purpose of the word Language Game is to highlight the link with FoL**. Let us try to reconstruct LW's line of thought.

Starting point is the statement that an account of meaning in terms of a fixed number of sentence types should be abandoned in favor of an account in terms of large array of LGs, that is furthermore subject to contingency and change.²⁸

Again, it is suggested that **language is a mere part of something larger**, which LW first calls 'an **activity**' and, in immediate apposition to 'activity', a **FoL**. It is as if he uses the term FoL to correct the use of the word 'activity', as if 'activity' was still too precise a word.

The point is that meaning cannot be reduced to a language-internal, local phenomenon, but should be approached **holistically**.²⁹ The extensive list of examples of LGs helps highlighting both the practical aspect and the heterogeneity.

The paragraph closes by contrasting the 'new' approach to traditional logic (including the *TLP*), in which only propositional (true or false) sentences were considered relevant.

²⁸ Interestingly, LW chooses mathematical practice as a good example of the historical contingency of practices.

²⁹ Baker and Hacker's comment includes the following observation: "It is unclear what principle of classification (if any) is employed. It is not obvious, e.g., that requesting and thanking, which are speech-acts, are on the same level as forming and testing a hypothesis or as acting on-stage, which are not." (Baker and Hacker 2005:87). Searle's notion of 'speech act', which despite its currency in philosophical circles has never been a very fruitful way of analyzing actual discourse (Mey 2001:212-217), evidently cannot be projected onto LW's thought and is subject to a criticism very similar to the one LW applies to 'sentence types'.

2.3 Excerpt #3. *PhU* §§240-242: die Übereinstimmung der Menschen

240. Es bricht kein Streit darüber aus (etwa zwischen Mathematikern), ob der Regel gemäß vorgegangen wurde oder nicht. Es kommt darüber z.B. nicht zu Tötlichkeiten. Das gehört zu dem Gerüst, von welchem aus unsere Sprache wirkt (z.B. eine Beschreibung gibt).

241. "So sagst du also, daß die Übereinstimmung der Menschen entscheide, was richtig und was falsch ist?" - Richtig und falsch ist, was Menschen sagen; und in der Sprache stimmen die Menschen überein. Dies ist keine Übereinstimmung der Meinungen, sondern der Lebensform.

242. Zur Verständigung durch die Sprache gehört nicht nur eine Übereinstimmung in den Definitionen, sondern (so seltsam dies klingen mag) eine Übereinstimmung in den Urteilen. Dies scheint die Logik aufzuheben; hebt sie aber nicht auf. - Eines ist, die Meßmethode zu beschreiben, ein Anderes, Messungsergebnisse zu finden und auszusprechen. Aber was wir »messen« nennen, ist auch durch eine gewisse Konstanz der Messungsergebnisse bestimmt.

A FoL is what people have in common that allows them to judge in the same way; this **commonality** is much more fundamental than what can be made explicit in definitions, and a fortiori than 'agreeing on this or that topic'. In other words: the kind of agreement intended here is **non- (or pre-)propositional**.

In this excerpt (as opposed to excerpt #1), the accent is not so much on the contrast between various FoLs, but on the function of a FoL within a **community(?)** sharing a single FoL. The FoL is presented as the **ultimate ground** for (i) judging, and only then for (ii) communicating these judgments through language.

The remarks about measuring also point out that a proper understanding of what is called 'measuring' cannot be reduced to a description of a method, but also involves (a) ways of reporting these results and (b) the fact that these results are more or less reliable (and this reliability depends on various different aspects, not only on the method; cf. e.g. excerpt #8 here below).

2.4 Excerpt #4. *PhPF* i §1: Kann nur hoffen, wer sprechen kann?

Man kann sich ein Tier zornig, furchtsam, traurig, freudig, erschrocken vorstellen. Aber hoffend? Und warum nicht?

Der Hund glaubt, sein Herr sei an der Tür. Aber kann er auch glauben, sein Herr werde übermorgen kommen? - Und *was* kann er nun nicht? - Wie mache denn ich's? - Was soll ich darauf antworten?

Kann nur hoffen, wer sprechen kann? Nur der, der die Verwendung einer Sprache beherrscht. D.h., die Erscheinungen des Hoffens sind Modifikationen dieser komplizierten Lebensform. (Wenn ein Begriff auf einen Charakter der menschlichen Handschrift abzielt, dann hat er keine Anwendung auf Wesen, welche nicht schreiben.)

The phenomena indicated by the word 'to hope' are 'modifications of a complex FoL' which is related to the ability to use language. The parallel with the non-applicability of graphological terms to creatures that do not write shows that LW means that it is the ability or inability for a creature to use the word 'to hope' that determines whether we can attribute hope to that creature or not.

Whether one finds LW's particular assessment of dogs' abilities convincing or not, is not important for our purposes.³⁰ The emphasis is on the fact that the **use of language co-determines the nature of a FoL** (and not only the other way around, as appeared to be the case in examples ##1-3).

Also note that the comparison between our FoL and that of a dog gives the notion its full **biological** connotation.

2.5 Excerpt #5. *BPhP1 §630: Das Hinzunehmende, Gegebene seien Tatsachen des Lebens (version 1: to punish certain actions, establish the state of affair thus and so, give orders, render accounts, describe colors, take an interest in others' feelings)*

Statt des Unzerlegbaren, Spezifischen, undefinierbaren: die Tatsache, daß wir so und so handeln, z.B. gewisse Handlungen strafen, den Tatbestand so und so feststellen, Befehle geben, Berichte erstatten, Farben beschreiben, uns für die Gefühle der Anderen interessieren. Das Hinzunehmende, Gegebene - könnte man sagen - seien Tatsachen des Lebens / seien Lebensformen /.

The point appears to be the following: in order to understand language use, we should not start from indefinable 'psychic entities' but from actual actions and LGs. We should view these 'matters of fact' (including the fact that we *actually* play these games) as 'a **given**'. I highlight the following aspects:

- The word 'FoL' is here used as an alternative for the terms 'facts of life' / 'matters of fact', and is again presented as an **ultimate ground** for our understanding, which does not require nor allow further justification.
- Note the **plural** 'FoLs', which here does not seem to refer to different FoLs of different individuals or communities (as was the case in #1, #3 and #4),³¹ but to **different irreducible practices within a single individual or community**.

³⁰ For an interpretation that attempts to explain how the example works, see Hacker 2015:10-11.

³¹ *Pace* Hacker, who interprets FoL in this excerpt (strictly speaking a different draft of this excerpt...) as referring to cultural or historical differences between communities (Hacker 2015:11 and 18). Hacker does not seem to take into account the possibility of different FoLs within a single individual or within a single community.

- Here, LGs are characterized as facts of life/FoLs themselves (and not as mere parts of a FoL).

2.6 Excerpt #6. *PhPF* xi §345: Das Hinzunehmende, Gegebene seien Tatsachen des Lebens (version 2: math and ink)³²

[context §§341-344: contingent aspects that are not explicitly discussed while doing mathematics, but that need to be presupposed for our mathematical language games to function the way they do, for instance the fact that we simply assume that the signs on a piece of paper don't change spontaneously]

Das Hinzunehmende, Gegebene –könnte man sagen- seien Lebensformen.

The word 'FoLs' (again plural) refers to the fundamental facts that underlie our (in this case mathematical) LGs. In this case the emphasis on the fact that these fundamental facts include **physical matters of fact**. This is as such a remarkable observation, which does not fit in with the standard 'social-constructivist' picture that is often presented as if it were LW's own vision.³³

2.7 Excerpt #7. *ÜG* §358: 'Ich weiß' drückt die beruhigte Sicherheit aus

357. Man könnte sagen: " 'Ich weiß' drückt die beruhigte Sicherheit aus, nicht die noch kämpfende."

358. Ich möchte nun diese Sicherheit nicht als etwas der Vorschnellheit oder Oberflächlichkeit Verwandtes ansehen, sondern als eine Lebensform. (Das ist sehr schlecht ausgedrückt und wohl auch gedacht.)

359. Das heißt doch, ich will sie als etwas auffassen, was jenseits von berechtigt und unberechtigt liegt; also gleichsam als etwas Animalisches.

Let us first reconstruct LW's line of thought. LW does not want to criticize the LG in which 'I know' is used to convey a certain kind of certainty, as if it would be - 'philosophically speaking'- 'superficial' or otherwise somehow lacking (for instance, because the certainty would be insufficiently justified). He does suggest that we should view this certainty as a FoL. He then explains what he means with the statement that 'we should view this certainty as a FoL': this certainty should be viewed as something that lies beyond the distinction justified/motivated vs. unjustified/unmotivated. He then identifies this 'beyond' with something '**animal**'.

³² In the paragraph numbering introduced in the 4th edition of *PhU*, this passage has become *Philosophie der Psychologie, Ein Fragment* xi, §§341-345 (Wittgenstein 2009:237-238).

³³ (Exactly the same formula refers to a totally different type of 'given' in #5 analyzed above).

I highlight the following aspects:

- The notion 'FoL' denotes here (as in #5 and #6, but not elsewhere) a **limited aspect** of 'our life' (in this case a certain kind of certainty).
- 'FoL' here has again its **biological** connotation, by referring to the 'animal' character of this unmotivated certainty.

2.8 Excerpt #8. ÜG §559: das Sprachspiel steht da – wie unser Leben

558. Wir sagen, wir wissen, daß das Wasser unter den und den Umständen kocht und nicht gefriert. Ist es denkbar, daß wir uns darin irren? Würde nicht ein Irrtum alles Urteil mit sich reißen? Noch mehr: Was könnte aufrecht stehen, wenn das fiel? Könnte Einer etwas finden, und wir nun sagen: »Es war ein Irrtum«?

Was immer in Zukunft geschehen mag, wie immer sich Wasser in Zukunft verhalten mag, – wir *wissen*, daß es sich bis jetzt in unzähligen Fällen *so* verhalten hat. Diese Tatsache ist in das Fundament unseres Sprachspiels eingegossen.

559. Du mußt bedenken, daß das Sprachspiel sozusagen etwas Unvorhersehbares ist. Ich meine: Es ist nicht begründet. Nicht vernünftig (oder unvernünftig).

Es steht da – wie unser Leben”.

In this excerpt, LW highlights the **primacy and ultimacy** of a LG in a very explicit way:

- it cannot be 'foreseen', i.e. its features **cannot be deduced** from anything else;
- it has **no 'ground'**, both in the sense of 'cause' and in the sense of 'justification';
- it is **neither reasonable nor unreasonable**, i.e. it cannot (and need not) be justified by (supposedly 'deeper') reasonable arguments;
- **it is there**, like our life, i.e. for LW no further analysis is possible or necessary.

The particular example with which this excerpt is concerned (the status of the fact that the boiling point of water is 100°C) is very interesting in that it includes a **physical** dimension within 'the foundation of our LG' (cf. #6 above).

It also illustrates the **structural interdependence** of various 'dimensions' within a LG: there is the empirical fact (as observed time and time again throughout the history of the LG); there are the various ways in which this 'knowledge' is embedded in practices that involve the measuring of temperature (whether as a result or as a norm); and there is also that fact that these practices give meaning to concepts such as 'temperature', but also 'water' and 'measuring'. All of these contribute together to the (contingent) 'primacy' of the LG, as it stands.

2.9 Excerpt #9. *BPhP2* §629 (= *Zettel* §567): das ganze Gewimmel

Wie könnte man die menschliche Handlungsweise beschreiben? Doch nur, indem man die Handlungen der verschiedenen Menschen, wie sie durcheinanderwimmeln, zeigte. Nicht, was Einer jetzt tut, sondern das ganze Gewimmel ist der Hintergrund, worauf wir eine Handlung sehen, und bestimmt unser Urteil, unsere Begriffe und Reaktionen.

This formulation ³⁴ is conceptually very rich: it highlights not only the importance to take into account **the whole** of our FoLs, but *at the same time* also the variation, heterogeneity and **fragmentation** that characterizes them.

Our close reading of a number of excerpts in the present section offers us a textual basis on which we can start building our argument. Throughout what follows, I will refer to the above excerpts using the numbering #1 through #9.

3. The functions of ‘Form of Life’, ‘Language Game’, and similar notions within Wittgenstein’s work

It may be useful to remind us of the fact that LW is not in the business of defining his concepts, let alone construing theoretical accounts. Anna Boncompagni is right to insist that FoL (but the same goes for any other Wittgensteinian keyword) is primarily “a philosophical *tool*, a part of Wittgenstein’s way of conceiving philosophical activity”, in this case “aimed at directing our attention to the belonging of words and sense to the broader horizon of life itself” (Boncompagni 2015:157).

In order to come to grips with the ‘meaning’ of these terms for LW himself, it is therefore necessary to try and formulate the way(s) in which they function within the lines of thought in which they occur. This is what I try to do in the present section.

³⁴ “Das ganze Gewimmel” is one of those memorable formulas that LW’s work is full of, which also in English translation (“the whole hurly-burly”) made history (see e.g. the title of chapter 3 of Lee Braver’s *Groundless Grounds: A Study of Wittgenstein and Heidegger*, where it is supposed to summarily refer to both LW’s and Heidegger’s holisms).

3.1 The Language Game as the primary locus of meaning

The analytical modus operandi that LW typically uses in *PhU* and later work to address any issue at all and the role of the notion of 'Sprachspiel' in this modus operandi is well-known to the reader:

- starting point is usually a philosophical problem of some kind, typically a problematic concept;
- first, LW shows how the standard ways of conceptualizing the problems turn out to be undesirable;
- LW then shows how the problematic term functions smoothly within everyday Language Games;
- LW additionally shows how this LG in its turn has its place within more encompassing patterns/structures (activities, Forms of Life, etc.);
- this should suffice to dissolve the initial apparent problem.

3.2 From Sprachspiel to Lebensform

We might be tempted to try and demarcate/define LW's key concepts with respect to each other by saying things like: FoL designates larger scale and/or more general patterns than LG, or: LG denotes formal patterns, and FoL more holistic entities. But in fact LW's ways of relating LGs and FoL fluctuate a lot.

A first aspect concerns the relative **complexity** of the patterns referred to:

- some passages suggest that a FoL is something 'larger' or 'more encompassing' than a LG (cf. #1, #2, #3);
- in other passages, more small-scale or limited patterns are also called FoLs: being able to speak or not (#5), the fact that we assume that certain physical aspects of the world remain stable (#6), a certain kind of certainty, expressed through the 'I know' game (#7).

The term FoL accordingly refers to patterns that coincide with a language as a whole, or the way of life of an entire community/culture, as well as to patterns that are not 'larger' than a single LG.

As for the **functions** of the concepts under scrutiny within the lines of thought in which they occur, we observe the following:

- 'FoL' emphasizes the non-verbal or not exclusively verbal aspects of whatever is discussed, often only to highlight the not exclusively verbal context of a LG; thus,

in #2, LW even states explicitly that the notion of LG has for a specific function to refer to the non-linguistic aspects;

- 'FoL' also systematically refers to the multi-dimensional character of the context of, for instance, a word (see section 4 below);
- 'FoL' always refers to an ultimately irreducible ground, sometimes beyond the individual LG;
- the notion LG does inherently imply a local, finite, bounded pattern, of which there are many; whereas FoL suggests a more global and stable structure.

One might want to try and formulate clear and strict definitions for one's own purposes, and this may or may not capture what LW seems to have meant in this or that passage (though not necessarily in another one), but this would require fixing the meanings of the terms beyond LW's own informal usage.

3.3 The 'given' and the 'ground'

In section 3.1 above, we have seen that LGs are construed as somehow 'primary' with respect to the meaning of the elements that occur within them, and that they serve as the ultimate ground for this meaning. This line of argument fits in with the fact that LW's later work consists for a large part in various kinds of arguments that are intended to render various types of reductionism and dualism unattractive (cf. section 5.2 below): if LW is able to show that a LG, in all its locality, contingency and complexity is 'primitive'/'primary', in that it cannot be reduced to any of the various dimensions that constitute it, this means ipso facto that reductionism is not a viable account of the phenomena under scrutiny.

LW thematizes this 'primary' as well as 'ultimate' character of LGs in the course of the lines of thought he develops himself, as is evident in e.g. excerpt #8 above, in which LW points out that LGs are unforeseeable, groundless, without justification and 'just there, like our life' (cf. the notion of 'the given' in #5 and #6). The following excerpts illustrates the same point about primacy, using the classic metaphor of **bedrock**:

PhU §217

217. »Wie kann ich einer Regel folgen?« - wenn das nicht eine Frage nach den Ursachen ist, so ist es eine nach der Rechtfertigung dafür, daß ich *so* nach ihr handle.

Habe ich die Begründungen erschöpft, so bin ich nun auf dem harten Felsen angelangt, und mein Spaten biegt sich zurück. Ich bin dann geneigt zu sagen: »So handle ich eben.«

(Erinnere dich, daß wir manchmal Erklärungen fordern nicht ihres Inhalts wegen, sondern der Form der Erklärung wegen. Unsere Forderung ist eine architektonische; die Erklärung eine Art Scheingesims, das nichts trägt.)

The message is clear: in the end, we cannot say anything more about ‘how we manage to follow a rule’ than simply that that’s what we do. There are no further justifications available, nor causal explanations.

The following excerpt uses the same ‘bedrock’ metaphor, though in this case to say what is *not* bedrock:

BPhP1 §648:

Der Begriff des Erlebnisses: Ähnlich dem des Geschehens, des Vorgangs, des Zustands, des Etwas, der Tatsache, der Beschreibung und des Berichts. Hier, meinen wir, stehen wir auf dem harten Urgrund, und tiefer als alle speziellen Methoden und Sprachspiele. Aber diese höchst allgemeinen Wörter haben eben auch eine höchst verschwommene Bedeutung. Sie beziehen sich in der Tat auf eine *Unmenge* spezieller Fälle, aber das macht sie nicht *härter*, sondern es macht sie eher flüchtiger.

LW here states that general concepts such as ‘experience’, ‘event’, ‘process’, ‘state’, ‘something’, ‘fact’, ‘description’ or ‘report’ are actually less solid and ‘deep’ than the fragmented, local and specific LGs from which they derive their varied and ‘fluid’ meanings.

And the following excerpt actually uses the word ‘**primär**’ to express the ‘primacy’ of LGs:

PhU §654-656:

654. Unser Fehler ist, dort nach einer Erklärung zu suchen, wo wir die Tatsachen als ‘Urphänomene’ sehen sollten. D.h., wo wir sagen sollten: *dieses Sprachspiel wird gespielt*.

655. Nicht um die Erklärung eines Sprachspiels durch unsre Erlebnisse handelt sich’s, sondern um die Feststellung eines Sprachspiels.

656. *Wozu* sage ich jemandem, ich hätte früher den und den Wunsch gehabt? – Sieh auf das Sprachspiel als das *Primäre!* Und auf die Gefühle, etc., als auf eine Betrachtungsweise, eine Deutung, des Sprachspiels!

Man könnte fragen: Wie ist der Mensch je dahin gekommen, eine sprachliche Äußerung zu machen, die wir “Berichten eines vergangen Wunsches”, oder einer vergangen Absicht, nennen?

Note that LW does not say that the kind of ‘feelings’ and ‘experiences’ mentioned do not exist or are not relevant. He only claims that the LG is primary for the purpose of

our understanding of the discourse involved (including our understanding of these mental aspects).

This use of the notion ‘Sprachspiel’ constitutes as such already a **holistic approach** to meaning, in which the meaning of, for instance, a sentence cannot be reduced to the words that constitute it, or to mental states and events supposedly underlying it, but fundamentally requires that we take into account the whole game in which it occurs, including non-verbal aspects. However, this does not mean that the purely ‘pragmatic’ (in strict sense of ‘action-related’) or purely ‘linguistic’ aspects are considered primary with respect to other aspects of our LGs or -a fortiori- our lives. In *PhU* §23 (already quoted as #2 above) LW makes it clear that his analysis in terms of LGs serves the purpose of pointing out that utterances/concepts/... are fully and intrinsically embedded in our practices and ultimately in “our lives” as a whole.

4. Language Game, Form of Life and similar notions as multidimensional structures

The notions of ‘Sprachspiel’ and ‘Lebensform’ denote explicitly multidimensional structures, which cannot be reduced to any of the dimensions involved. This observation is -of course- not entirely new.³⁵ See, for instance, the following, seminal description (it does not look as if it is meant as a proper *definition*) of LW’s notion of FoL that Baker and Hacker offer in their comments ad *PU* §19 (=excerpt #1 above):

A form of life is a way of living, a pattern of activities, actions, interactions, and feelings which are inextricably interwoven with, and partly constituted by, uses of language. It rests upon very general pervasive facts of nature. It includes shared natural and linguistic responses, broad agreement in definitions and judgements, and corresponding behaviour. The term is sometimes used so that it converges on the idea of a culture; elsewhere it converges on a more biological notion.

(Baker and Hacker 2005:74)

For our purposes, we retain the following aspects:

³⁵ Cf. also Andrew Lewis’ “three basic elements in Wittgenstein’s account of our response to a rule” (Lewis 1988:293–297): “our training in the use of the rule” (pp. 293–294); “various psychological and physiological properties” (pp. 294–295); a number of “very general facts of nature” (pp. 295–297) that make rules learnable and give them their point.

- Baker and Hacker highlight the multidimensionality of the notion, by enumerating the many aspects that play a role in it; this multidimensionality is the topic of the present section.
- Baker and Hacker refer to the relations between pragmatic and psychological aspects of the pattern and its verbal aspect by the formula ‘inextricably interwoven with, and partly constituted by’; this formula expresses the idea that I will call ‘structuralism’ in section 5.3 below.³⁶

This section consists of a panorama of the various aspects/dimensions involved in LGs and FoLs. For the sake of a convenient presentation, I distinguish the following headings: the linguistic dimension (4.1), the pragmatic dimension (4.2), the mental/cognitive/psychological dimension (4.3), the epistemic dimension (4.4), the biological dimension (4.5), the physical/material dimension (4.6), and the social/cultural/historical dimension (4.7).³⁷

4.1 The linguistic dimension

According to the excerpts analyzed above, language use is a very determinative aspect for those beings that know language, typically ourselves (#1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6). Cf. for instance LW’s proposal that the ability to ‘hope’ depends on the ability to use language (#4).

The details of the ‘grammar’ of our languages obviously co-determine how we make sense of things. And, of course, our philosophical interest (or our un-Wittgensteinian theoretical or empirical/phenomenological interests, for that matter) in ‘making sense of things’ operates through language, so all our theoretical or analytical dealings will necessarily include an important verbal component.

Still, LW also points out that meaning cannot be reduced to language as a system. As pointed out above, LW presents the notion of LG as something that points beyond itself (#2: “Das Wort »Sprachspiel« soll hier hervorheben, daß das Sprechen der Sprache ein Teil ist einer Tätigkeit, oder einer Lebensform”).

³⁶ I agree with both these aspects of Baker and Hacker’s comment, but I disagree with their (apparently) asymmetrical treatment of the relations between the dimensions involved. See section 5.3 below.

³⁷ The headings in the present section are dictated by the ad hoc requirements of ease of presentation with respect to the materials available, and imply no more than that.

In other words: in those cases in which language plays a role in a practice (and that includes our analytical and/or theoretical practices),³⁸ its role is indeed irreducible and important; but meaning cannot be reduced to the purely linguistic properties of our language (say: its lexicon, phonology, syntax and semantics), on the contrary, even our most predominantly verbal practices are inherently *practices* and make sense in the same way as any other practice.³⁹

4.2 The pragmatic dimension

The notion LG already implies a predominant pragmatic aspect, in that the very word 'game' suggests activity (see section 1.3 above). But also the list of activities in *PhU* §23 that exemplify the concept 'LG' (quoted in section 1.1), highlights the practical aspect: many of the examples are not even predominantly verbal.

Throughout the excerpts analyzed in the above, we have observed that actions/activities/practices also constitute an important aspect of Lebensformen (see especially #2, in which it was explicitly stated that the very function of the notion of LG was to point out that language use was part of an activity/FoL, and #5 in which 'die Tatsache, daß wir so und so handeln' is presented as one the facts of life, that we simply have to accept). The point is (as it is elsewhere): practice is not ultimately grounded in propositional content, but the other way around.

In the following example, 'Handlungsweise' serves a similar function of 'ultimate ground' as 'FoL' in other cases (cf. also #9), which does suggest that the pragmatic aspect of FoLs is -in a sense that requires further specification (see section 5 below)- perhaps more crucial to LW's conception of FoL than the other ones:

ÜG §§108-110

108. »Aber gibt es denn da keine objektive Wahrheit? Ist es nicht wahr, oder aber falsch, daß jemand auf dem Mond war?« Wenn wir in unserm System denken, so ist es gewiß, daß kein Mensch je auf dem Mond war. Nicht nur ist uns so etwas nie im Ernst von vernünftigen Leuten berichtet worden, sondern unser ganzes System der Physik verbietet uns, es zu glauben. Denn diese verlangt Antworten auf die Fragen: »Wie hat er die Schwerkraft überwunden?«, »Wie konnte er ohne Atmosphäre leben?« und tausend andere, die nicht zu beantworten wären. Wie aber, wenn uns statt allen diesen Antworten entgegnet würde: »Wir wissen nicht, *wie* man auf

³⁸ Let's not forget that LW -at least nominally- has no theoretical ambitions and only aims at curing our philosophical ailments. See chapter 3, section 1.1.

³⁹ One of the main net effects of LW's contribution may have been that it (co-)originated the pragmatic approach to language (and any other human endeavor). See also what has been said about LW as a 'philosopher' of language in section 1.2 above.

den Mond kommt, aber die dorthin kommen, erkennen sofort, daß sie dort sind; und auch du kannst ja nicht alles erklären.« Von Einem, der dies sagte, würden wir uns geistig sehr entfernt fühlen.

109. »Ein Erfahrungssatz läßt sich *prüfen*« (sagen wir). Aber wie? Und wodurch?

110. Aber das Ende ist nicht die unbegründete Voraussetzung, sondern die unbegründete Handlungsweise.

The point that practice is prior to propositional content is very explicit here: *practice is presented as the ultimately irreducible ground*. The 'man on the moon' example highlights, on the one hand, the historical contingency of our practices (see section 4.7 below), but, on the other hand, also shows that the fact that in the meantime someone *did* go the moon, doesn't change the point made at all. Our beliefs cluster with a number of other beliefs *and* practices that serve as relevant contexts for these beliefs: we *are* able to answer questions such as "How did he defeat gravity?", "How did he get his air for breathing?", etc., and these replies *do* go hand in hand with a huge network of actual practices (for instance: technical practices related to aeronautics and communication technology, but also the custom to ask such questions and give such explanations).⁴⁰

4.3 The mental/cognitive/psychological dimension

A lot has been made of the anti-psychological strand in LW's later work, but LW's stance has never been to deny the existence of mental phenomena (in other words: LW was not a behaviorist). In some of the passages analyzed above, it is evident that our mental experiences (feeling of certainty, hope, pain, color perception, ...) have their place within our FoL(s) (#4, #7).

However, LW did forcefully argue against the idea that meaning, reference, intentionality, etc. should ultimately depend on mental representation, and argued for the idea that meaning (as well as the mental aspects referred to) cannot be understood independently from the LGs and FoLs they occur in. To say it with a slogan: *cognition/representation/intention always takes place within the context of a practice*.

According to LW, meaning and intentionality cannot be reduced to mental representation, which -for starters- would lead to an infinite regress. On the contrary: mental representations are always already embedded in LGs/FoLs and the very

⁴⁰ Cf. Heidegger's notion of *Bedeutsamkeit* and the **relevance** relations that take him from a cobbler's workshop to the steel industry and the sun and the moon in a wink. See sections 2.3 and 2.4 of chapter 2.

identifying a mental experience requires a practical context in which the naming of such an experience would make sense. This point leads then to the issue as to whether LGs/FoLs are necessarily public and social (see here below).

LW argues at great length to make this point, and the point is made in very many different contexts, most famously in the part of *Philosophical Investigations* that deals with rule-following and the possibility of a 'private' language' (*PhU* §§243-315),⁴¹ but also the two volumes of *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* (*BPhP1* and *BPhP2*).⁴²

4.4 The epistemic dimension

In the same vein, I would like to mention **knowledge**,⁴³ as this is still one of the key concepts in Philosophy of Science and (especially) Philosophy of Mathematics, the immediate academic context for this study. In his *On Certainty* (*ÜG*), LW deals at length with knowledge-related problems, and his treatment of it is in the same vein as his treatment of all other forms of propositional content and/or mental representation: he encourages us to view them as part and parcel of the practices in which they play a role (if any):

ÜG §38

38. Das Wissen in der Mathematik. Man muß sich hier immer wieder an die Unwichtigkeit eines »inneren Vorgangs« oder »Zustands« erinnern und fragen »Warum soll er wichtig sein? Was geht er mich an?« Interessant ist es, wie wir die mathematischen Sätze *gebrauchen*.

In the following excerpt, LW highlights that it is not a priori clear what contents count as knowledge, and that it is hard to pinpoint exactly what the function of these contents may be with respect to the actual practices they are supposed to underlie:

ÜG §§360-363

360. Ich **weiß**, daß dies mein Fuß ist. Ich könnte keine Erfahrung als Beweis des Gegenteils anerkennen. – Das kann ein Ausruf sein; aber was *folgt* daraus? Jedenfalls, daß ich mit einer Sicherheit, die den Zweifel nicht kennt, meinem Glauben gemäß handeln werde.

361. Ich könnte aber auch sagen: Es ist mir von Gott geoffenbart, daß das so ist. Gott hat mich gelehrt, daß das mein Fuß ist. Und geschähe also etwas, was dieses Erkenntnis zu widerstreiten scheint, so müßte ich *das* als Trug ansehen.

⁴¹ Cf. the vast literature following Kripke's classic *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language: An Elementary Exposition* (Kripke 1982); for an overview, see Miller and Wright 2002 and Kusch 2006.

⁴² For the impact of LW's work on certain branches of psychology, see Hutto 2009; Moyal-Sharrock 2009; see also the neuro-based approach to Philosophy of Mind in Hurley 1998, quoted below.

⁴³ The decision to give 'knowledge' its own heading is a mere matter of presentation.

362. Aber zeigt sich hier nicht, daß das Wissen mit einer Entscheidung verwandt ist?

363. Und es ist hier schwer, den Übergang von dem, was man ausrufen möchte, zu den Folgen in der Handlungsweise zu finden.

And the following excerpt aims at making us see that what -from an epistemological point of view- seems the most fundamental pieces of knowledge, from LW's pragmatic perspective need not have a role at all in actual practice, let alone a foundational one:⁴⁴

ÜG §§476-479

476. Das Kind lernt nicht, daß es Bücher gibt, daß es Sessel gibt, etc. etc., sondern es lernt Bücher holen, sich auf Sessel (zu) setzen, etc. Es kommen freilich später auch Fragen nach der Existenz auf: »Gibt es ein Einhorn?« usw. Aber so eine Frage ist nur möglich, weil in der Regel keine ihr entsprechende auftritt. Denn wie weiß man, wie man sich von der Existenz des Einhorns zu überzeugen hat? Wie hat man die Methode gelernt zu bestimmen, ob etwas existiere oder nicht?

477. »So muß man also wissen, daß die Gegenstände existieren, deren Namen man durch eine hinweisende Erklärung einem Kind beibringt.« – Warum muß man's wissen? Ist es nicht genug, daß Erfahrung später nicht das Gegenteil erweise? Warum soll denn das Sprachspiel auf einem Wissen ruhen?

478. Glaubt das Kind, daß es Milch gibt? Oder weiß es, daß es Milch gibt? Weiß die Katze, daß es eine Maus gibt?

479. Sollen wir sagen, daß die Erkenntnis, es gebe physikalische Gegenstände, eine sehr frühe oder eine sehr späte sei?

Taken together, these excerpts illustrate quite well LW's contention that knowledge does not have a 'given' function, outside specific LGs. Rather than making the epistemological assumption that a practice (say: a mathematical one) necessarily presupposes knowledge, the question to be asked is: what role does knowledge *actually* play in this practice? And it may turn out that it does not play any role at all, for that matter... (for this 'pragmatic' attitude, see also ÜG §245, which he begins by asking the question: "Zu wem sagt Einer, er wisse etwas?").

⁴⁴ Cf. "[...]the fundamental mistake lies in treating language-games as epistemic, that is, as based on beliefs which can be isolated and captured in assertions to be objectively assessed and directly compared with opposing claims. Just as our understanding of words exists in our skillful use of them rather than in definitions, so our deepest convictions are embodied in our behavior, in our reactions and interactions. Our worldview is reflexive rather than reflective, pragmatic rather than epistemic." (Braver 2012:198).

4.5 The biological dimension

The term *Lebensform* sometimes acquires a biological connotation. We have seen that LW sometimes refers to parallels between the way in which we play even our most complex language games on the one hand, and animal behavior on the other hand (#1, #4, #7).⁴⁵ By pointing out the ‘animal’ character of our activities, LW also highlights their pre-verbal and pre-rational character. Thus, LW also encourages us to view even the normative, cultural and linguistic aspects as part of our ‘**natural history**’:

PhU §25

Man sagt manchmal: die Tiere sprechen nicht, weil ihnen die geistigen Fähigkeiten fehlen. Und das heißt: “Sie denken nicht, darum sprechen sie nicht.” Aber: sie sprechen eben nicht. Oder besser: sie verwenden die Sprache nicht a wenn wir von den primitivsten Sprachformen absehen. a Befehlen, fragen, erzählen, plauschen gehören zu unserer Naturgeschichte so, wie gehen, essen, trinken, spielen.⁴⁶

Our LGs are part of our natural history, and thus a ‘given’, on a par with our physiological determinants. Cf. also the continuity between even our most ‘evolved’ cultural, apparently knowledge-based behavior and animals’ instinctive behavior that is as well adapted as ours, as in *ÜG* §478, already quoted above: does a child know that milk exists? does a cat? And in the same vein: what does a mathematician need to *know* in order to be able to calculate this or that?

4.6 The physical/material dimension

The properties of the world in which we live play a determining role in our *Lebensform(en)*, if only as a condition for the possibility to acquire/learn certain language games (#6: for us to learn math the way we do, we have to assume that marks on paper do not just change when we look away). Excerpt #8 also pointed out that the physical facts (in that case: the fact that water boils at 100°C) are inextricably intertwined with the ‘foundations of our LG’ (in this case: of measuring temperature, or simply of using the word ‘temperature’). Similar points are made elsewhere:

⁴⁵ Hacker (2015) argues that LW’s concept of FoL is not predominantly a biological concept, but an anthropological-ethnographical one. However, Hacker presupposes a very restricted view of the concept ‘biological’, as if it was strictly linked to ‘species’. Obviously, LW does not say that there is ‘only one human FoL’. In the above I operate with a wider denotation of ‘biological’, which seems to capture LW’s meaning more accurately.

⁴⁶ As far as comparisons with animals go, there is of course the inevitable lion of *PhPF*, §xi, §327: “Wenn ein Löwe sprechen könnte, wir könnten ihn nicht verstehn”.

- learning LGs involving colors and color names would not be possible in physical circumstances in which colors changed all the time or where everything has the same color (*BPhP2* §§198-199);
- measuring would not be the same with elastic rulers (*BGM1* §5);
- it would be impossible to teach people how to count using beans, if beans had a tendency to randomly disappear; if the same happened with most other objects, there would be no such thing as counting and sentences such as “2+2=4” would lose their use (*BGM1* §37);⁴⁷
- the reliability of ink and paper are prerequisites for calculating using these media (excerpt #6);
- etc.

These counterfactuals only help to bring about the idea that our FoLs crucially depend on those things that are ‘given’: our actual ways of -say- COOKING FOOD, or DOING MATH, or BUILDING BRIDGES, depend on what is actually ‘given’ for us, including what is physically ‘given’.

4.7 The social/cultural/historical dimension

We have seen that FoL sometimes is presented as a feature of a **community or a culture** (#1, #3)⁴⁸ and LW’s work suggests that FoLs (and related concepts) can be understood as properties of a community of humans, which may be also characterized by a single language or culture. LGs/FoLs can be compared to each other and their similarities and differences can be analyzed; this can even be done cross-culturally (up to a certain extent) and LW famously invented many exotic-sounding FoLs, for instance:⁴⁹ a people that does not know games (*PhU* §200), another one that does not know trains, but in which children do play ‘trains’ (*PhU* §282); a tribe that can only do calculation in the head (*PhU* §385);⁵⁰ tribes that believe

⁴⁷ Geschähe das Gleiche aber mit Stäben, Fingern, Strichen und den meisten andern Dingen, so hätte das Rechnen damit ein Ende. // »Aber wäre dann nicht doch noch $2 + 2 = 4$?« - Dieses Sätzchen wäre damit unbrauchbar geworden. -

⁴⁸ Cf. e.g. *The Brown Book* p.134, where –as Baker and Hacker point out (Baker and Hacker 2005:75)– the word ‘culture’ occurs in a context in which it is replaced by Form of Life in the later version *PhU* §23 (cf. Boncompagni 2015:157–158, 167).

⁴⁹ One of the main points of Hacker’s recent article ‘Forms of Life’ (Hacker 2015) is his argument that LW’s concept of FoL is predominantly anthropological, rather than biological. It should perhaps not be surprising that LW’s work found very fruitful applications in interpreting actual anthropological data (Winch 1964; Girardin 1997) and as an inspiration for ethnomethodological approaches (Lynch 1997).

⁵⁰ “Ist aber auch dies möglich, daß einem Volksstamm nur das Kopfrechnen bekannt ist, und kein andres?”

that people sometimes go the moon (ÜG §106; ÜG §667); a tribe that caught Moore and believed that he came from somewhere between earth and moon (ÜG §264); etc. Practices are -in this sense- thoroughly and undoubtedly **social**: many of them involve indeed interaction between several agents at a time, they are typically the product of cultural transmission, and they vary from one group to another.

But -apart from all that- there is also the fundamental **normativity**, which (cf. the 'rule following' and 'private language' arguments) already on its own implies public criteria (in principle if not in actual fact). The point of the private language argument is precisely that: for an individual to be able to make sense of his own -say- internal experiences, the same mechanisms apply that also enable other people to understand him/her.⁵¹ In any case, so much is clear: LW's account cannot be made to agree with the standard picture, in which the social should be ultimately be described in terms of the individual.

There exists an enormously vast and technically intricate secondary literature on the issues related to the social character (or not) of LW's account of FoLs, and I have not much to contribute to them here. So suffice to briefly refer to a few topics insofar as they have a direct bearing on the issues at hand in this chapter.

Let us first take a look at the notion of **agreement** (for an overview of the post-Kripke debates, see Kusch 2006:257-259) which was central to excerpt #3 ("die Übereinstimmung der Menschen"): this pre-verbal agreement is presented as primary and unjustified, which should already preclude interpretations which take conventionalism literally, as somehow involving collective decisions. On top of that, it should be pointed out that **conventionalist interpretations** (of whatever brand) cannot be right in the light of the physical and biological dimensions of FoLs pointed about above (pace both Kripke and Kusch, as referred to here above, to whom this aspect has escaped attention, or so it appears).

This brings us to the more general issue as to whether LGs, FoLs, etc. are to be understood as **primarily social or not** (for a mainstream interpretation see Baker and Hacker 2009:149-155, and Hacker's essay 'Private linguists and 'private linguists' - Robinson Crusoe sails again' (Baker and Hacker 2009:157-168); for a discussion of Kripke's reading and those of his main critics, see Kusch 2006:177-206). The point can't be argued in full within the limits of this study, but I would like to briefly point out that the crucial question is whether one chooses to define 'social' in terms of a

⁵¹ For a draft account of similar lines of thought in a number of different 'schools', see Scheppers 2004.

'community' that preexists practices or FoLs, or not: in some cases, it may make sense to speak of a community in the strong sense of a group of individuals who -like a nuclear family, or a band of travellers- share a very large number of practices, a physical space, a distinctive sociolect, etc., whereas in other cases this picture does not fit so well. Can one comfortably say that mathematicians form a community in a way that is independent of the fact that they -part of their time- co-participate in a cluster of practices? In any case, the question needs to be asked whether it makes sense to speak of a community as independent from the practices/FoLs that their members share.

Finally, we need to mention the fact that our FoLs are far from eternal and universal. On the contrary, LW is keen on insisting on not only cultural variation, historical change and the **contingency** that these bring (as we have seen at the beginning of this section 4.7), but also on the **fragmentation** of the human 'Handlungsweise' (in general) into a hurly-burly of practices (excerpt #9).

The above 'panoramic overview' has shown us that LW presents LGs and FoLs as truly multidimensional structures, in that none of the various dimensions involved suffices to define them. This important observation opens the door for us to tackle the issue of LW's potential contribution to a practice-centered ontology.

5. The ontological status of Language Games, Practices, and Forms of Life

In the General Introduction, we framed the aims of the present investigation in the context of the practice turn and the ontological issues to which the use of the term 'practice' as a key concept gives rise. By framing our issue in terms of the concept 'ontology', we are perhaps already going beyond the limits of what could still be called a 'Wittgensteinian' approach, but -for the purposes of this study- the term 'ontological' may be taken in the 'light', discursive, non-metaphysical, sense of the system of 'categories', objects and relationships that are at work within LW's discourse.⁵² In any case, our aims are not primarily exegetical anyway: our main

⁵² I would personally be inclined to identify these 'ontological' matters as 'heavily metaphysical' as they ever get, but the present chapter is not the place to argue this).

concern is with the contemporary practice turn in such disciplines as Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Mathematics, or Philosophy of Mind. The issue that motivates our investigation is: how do practices relate to the other ontological variables involved (people, things, communities, words, ...)?

Our preliminary assumptions are simple and should not be too controversial in view of LW's status as an acknowledged precursor of the practice turn:

- LW's concept of LG can be seen as an early avatar of the concept of 'practice', and for ease of exposition I will use the term 'practice' to cover a number of Wittgensteinian concept, including 'practice' (indeed), LG, Handlungsweise, etc.;
- LW's own account of the multidimensionality of LGs and FoLs and his use of such concepts as 'primacy', 'bedrock' etc. has an obvious bearing on the ontological issues.

These all in all reasonable assumptions should suffice for us to try and see how LW's work can help us develop a coherent approach to the ontological issues surrounding the practice turn.

5.1 Primacy - primitiveness - ultimateness - (ir)reducibility

We have seen that many of LW's lines of thought take the shape of arguments about 'primacy', 'ultimateness' and 'grounds'. These attributes are invariably applied to avatars of the concept of practice (LG, Handlungsweise, praxis) or to the encompassing concept FoL, while other candidates for 'ultimateness' are systematically dismissed.

Let us start with a very simple (perhaps oversimplified) recap of what it can mean for something to be 'primary' with respect to something else. It usually refers to the question: can this or that variable be reduced to other, 'underlying' variables or is it ontologically 'primitive'? This type of question is about the identity of the entities involved: 'X is reducible to Y' means 'X is *really* Y'. Various standard replies to such questions are available:

- ontological monism: matter primordial (materialism), or ideas primordial (idealism), ...;
- ontological dualism: matter and mind (or body and soul) equiprimordial;
- ontological pluralism: many (all?) things equiprimordial.

How do these options apply to our issue? On the one hand, we have seen a very clear antireductionist strand in LW's work (as most commentators have): LG and -a fortiori- FoL appeared to have been introduced for the specific purpose of making

reductionist tendencies less attractive and offering an alternative perspective. At the same time, the practice-related concepts were presented as a somehow 'ultimate ground', beyond which no further 'digging' is possible. Should we interpret this notion of 'ground' in terms of 'reduction'? In that case a problem immediately arises: why would 'practice' be a better candidate for the ultimate ontological ground than 'mental representation' (or 'matter' for that matter)? LW evidently proposes that 'practice' is somehow primary to other dimensions, but it is a priori hard to see how a 'reduction to practice' would be any better than any other reduction. I will first develop that problem a bit further, before trying to formulate a solution.

5.2 The myth of the given and the myth of the giving

In Chapter 6, 'Wittgenstein on Practice and the Myth of the Giving', of her magnificent book *Consciousness in Action* (Hurley 1998:221–244), the late Susan **Hurley** offers a very interesting account of what exactly the notion of practice (and related ones such as Language Game and Form of Life) can contribute to the subject matter of her book, and beyond. Hurley starts from the problem of content (or aboutness), i.e. the relationship between experiences, utterances, representations etc. (depending on the framework) on the one hand, and their contents (whether conceived of as the 'real world' or not) on the other.

Hurley distinguishes two types of solutions that LW argues against:

- Platonism (in the very large sense of the word): "appealing to some intrinsic power of objects themselves, whether these are the ultimate worldly objects or rather abstract objects like rules";
- psychologism, mentalism, Cartesianism: "appealing to some intrinsic power of items on the side of the mind (e.g., images, formulations of rules, experiences, feelings, etc.) to bridge the gap from the opposite direction" (Hurley 1998:223).

Hurley then briefly describes how LW rejects both alternatives, as well as attempts to bridge the gaps by introducing intermediaries, which always give rise to regress.

Whatever the details, LW appears to claim that an appeal to practice should help getting out of the conundrum. For instance, the problem as to whether practice should be viewed as a primarily individual or primarily social matter is not at hand at this point (Hurley 1998:228–229; cf. section 4.7 above). Here we are only concerned with the more fundamental issue as to how practice in general helps avoiding both Platonism and Cartesianism, as well as the various 'intermediarisms' that have been shown to lead to infinite regress.

In this context, Hurley introduces the idea that we have to steer clear of the potential pitfalls induced by two opposite 'myths':

- **the myth of the given** (already rejected by Kant): "the idea that the content of perceptual experience can be taken as an unproblematic primitive, which the mind passively receives from the world, a matter of pure input" (Hurley 1998:240);
- **the myth of the giving** (which practice-based approaches risk succumbing to): "the idea that the content of intentional action can be taken as unproblematically primitive, something generated by the active mind, a matter of pure output" (Hurley 1998:240–241).

Both pitfalls have to be avoided (Hurley 1998:242),⁵³ but it's obvious that the myth that LW (under any more or less reasonable interpretation) is most liable to succumb to, is the myth of giving: does LW actually suggest that practices, qua 'output' of agents, generate the connection between (1) the 'inside' (their representations, intentions, cognition, whatever) of these agents, and (2) the 'outside' (say: the world)?

5.3 Wittgenstein's holism and structuralism

Let's come back to the general question: how does 'practice' help? And let's start by recapitulating the issue: we have seen that if we reduce everything to practice, we are prone to falling into the myth of the giving; if we reduce everything to the world (or experience of it), we fall into the myth of the given. In any case, it is not a priori clear why 'practice' should be a better candidate for ultimate ground than any other type of entity.

A holistic conception of practice

What is characteristic of the lines of thought we analyzed above, is that time and time again the attributes 'primary', 'ultimate', etc. were applied to various avatars of the concept of 'practice', but also that time and time again LW emphasized that these practices/FoLs are:

- (1) complex/multidimensional: various variables exist in relation to each other within the encompassing structure of a practice or FoL;
- (2) culturally and historically contingent: practices/FoLs are not presented as eternal and universal, on the contrary (see section 4.7 above).

⁵³ NB that Hurley is concerned with "rescuing realism". No such concern underlies the present research.

Let's call (1), the fact that practices are construed as complex structures, that encompass the agents, the behavioral patterns and whatever parts of the outside world may be relevant to it, the **holistic** conception of practice.

The holism (1), but also the contingency (2), that characterizes Wittgensteinian practices makes them already very unlikely candidates for the ultimate ground in a reductionist line of thought: a practice is not like an atom, a subject or an idea: what would it even mean to 'reduce' -say- the meaning of a word to a LG, a FoL, 'our lives', or -a fortiori- the whole hurly-burly of practices mentioned in excerpt #9?

Let us now try and formulate how this holistic conception of practice/FoL may help us out of the interpretative conundrum.

Structural/internal relations

The solution may lie in the nature of the **relations between the various dimensions** that make up a practice/FoL. The locus classicus for this line of thought is Baker and Hacker's commentary on *PhU*. Let us go first back to their remark on the relation between language and practice already quoted at the beginning of section 4:

A form of life is a way of living, a pattern of activities, actions, interactions, and feelings which are inextricably interwoven with, and partly constituted by, uses of language.
(Baker and Hacker 2005:74)

And similarly, in their commentary on *PhU* §19, Baker and Hacker tell us:

What seemed in the Tractatus to be an ineffable ('metalogical') relationship of agreement between language and reality is now seen to be an intra-linguistic grammatical relationship.
(Baker and Hacker 2009:75)

The notion of '**intra-linguistic relation**' is what I would like to highlight here. But let me first point out that -in the light of the discussion in sections 1.2 and 4.1 above- I do not agree with their idea that 'language' is the relevant encompassing structure from LW's point of view: the way we read LW in the previous sections, LW's lines of thought went in opposite direction from what Baker and Hacker suggest: from language use to more encompassing practices to even the whole of 'our lives'.

Elsewhere in their commentary, Baker and Hacker referred to this type of relation by the expression 'internal relation', which became seminal:

There is an internal relation between a rule and its extension. If a rule requires one to V in circumstances C, then V-ing in C is what is called 'obeying the rule'. The internal relation is

forged by the existence of a practice, a regularity in applying the rule, and the normative behaviour (of justification, criticism, correction of mistakes, etc.) that surrounds the practice. Only when such complex forms of behaviour are in play does it make sense to speak of there being a rule at all, and of rule-following behaviour that accords with it. For the mere signs, the rule-formulation, are not magic. They express a rule only if they are used as the expression of a rule, a norm of correctness, a justification for acting thus-and-so, an explanation of action, in the context of a persistent practice.

(Baker and Hacker 2005:14)⁵⁴

In this excerpt Baker and Hacker talk about the relations between (1) a rule, (2) verbal representations of the rule and (3) behavior that does (or does not) follow the rule. These relations are part of the very **structure** (my term) of the practice, and not external to it. This idea of internal/structural relations between the variables involved in a practice/FoL has been picked up in various contexts, of which I shall mention only two.

First, Susan Hurley reformulates Baker and Hacker's account in the context of the problem of intentionality/aboutness (the relation between mental contents and the 'outside world') within a neuro-based Philosophy of Mind in terms of '**contextualism**' (in the specific sense that that term has within that field):

While contextualist views differ in various respects, they have in common the denial that content is constitutively independent of worldly context. So, for example, they reject individualist and internalist views about content, though different versions may appeal to various aspects of a subject's context or environment (social, physical, etc.), and in different ways (through normal causes, teleology, etc.).

(Hurley 1998:236)

Note that Hurley's contextualism remains within a framework in which a difference is made between a 'text' (in this case: the cognitive, agent-internal aspect) and a 'context' (the world outside the agent), i.e. in which a certain asymmetry between the various dimensions involved is maintained, plausibly due to the 'realist'/physicalist background of the neuroscientific field Hurley's research is based in. LW's holistic and structuralist conception of practice, however, does not attribute any particular primacy to the individual agent.

A second way of formulating non-reductionist types of relations is what Martin Kusch calls 'semantic primitivism' (Kusch 2006:207-236), i.e. the notion that meaning

⁵⁴ For a similar account by the same authors, see Baker and Hacker 2009:156.

and content are *sui generis*, and that 'intending something by something' is a state *sui generis*, which cannot be reduced to either dispositions, qualitative feelings, mental representations or anything else. Kusch makes a difference between a 'meaning-determinist' form of semantic primitivism and a 'meaning-sceptical' form. In this Kripkensteinian dichotomy, the present account presumably ends up on the 'sceptical' side (which happens to be Kuschkenkripp's preferred interpretation, anyway).

Wittgenstein's structuralism

In any case, for our purposes it is sufficient to be clear about what the notion of 'internal relation' implies for the ontology of practice. What I propose here is a reading that implies **structuralism**⁵⁵ in the strong sense of the word: *the very identity of entities is determined by the relations between them within an encompassing structure.*⁵⁶

LW produced numerous formulations of the factual observation that de facto there is no regress, that de facto we simply do agree, that de facto our LGs are what they are, and our FoLs are what they are. The types of radical structuralism referred to above appears to be the key to an interpretation that offers an answer to the question 'how are LW's observations helpful?'⁵⁷ If we take them as pointing towards a reduction to practice, they do not make much sense. As Hurley pointed out: a reduction to practice is not more helpful than a reduction to experience or anything else.⁵⁸ Similarly, Hacking is right that -quoted in the context of reductionist interpretations- aphorisms such as "If I have exhausted the justifications I have reached bedrock, and

⁵⁵ Note: **holism** is *not* already implied by **contextualism** (at least in a suitably literal sense of the term). As a matter of fact, the notion of 'context' itself is -strictly speaking- incompatible with holism: a holistic turn within a domain consists in integrating what used to be considered a contextual item within the very system under scrutiny; one could also say that holism is the structuralisation/textualization of context (the context is now included in the 'text', so to speak). Here, I also distinguish holism from **structuralism**: one can be a structuralist without being a holist (in the present sense of the terms), if one approaches the various items that make up a certain domain as a system, within which the relations between the items are ontologically prior to the items, but chooses to operate with a clear distinction between that system and its 'context'. In this sense holism is in a certain sense opposite to contextualism (when e.g. Dain uses the term 'contextualism' in a sense close to what I call here 'holism' (Dain 2008:101), I would argue this is a misnomer).

⁵⁶ NB: structuralism applies at the type-level; at the token-level all relations are external.

⁵⁷ Of course, the obvious answer may be to point to the therapeutic aims of LW's philosophy: these lines of thought may serve as an incitation to let go of the very idea of ontological inquiry, which does not require further interpretation. But in the present study we are exploring how LW may help us while we remain inside the ontologist's FoL. This attitude may make us -technically speaking- hypochondriacs.

⁵⁸ Hurley also argues against the idea (which she previously had held) that LW's apparent bias towards the practical side, might be due to tactical/strategic motifs (Hurley 1998:237-240).

my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: 'This is simply what I do'" (*PhU* §217, already quoted above) easily degenerate into "ritual babble" (Hacking 2011:165-166). I argue here that we cannot make sense of LW's remarks while holding on to any of the reductionisms available, whether physicalist, constructivist or conventionalist ones, but that a properly holistic-cum-structuralistic reading does give proper substance to LW's anti-foundational remarks: saying that, within our FoLs, there are structural relations between the -in part historically contingent- norms ruling our practices, the physical properties of our world, our biological set-up, our language, etc., is not empty babble, though it does require to let go of a lot of the metaphysical sediment that is a deep-rooted part of our tradition, as well as facing the issues that come with the 'new' perspective.

Meaning and reference as structural embedding

The way that LW put his notion of LG/FoL to work serves the explicit purpose to make us pay attention to the way meaning is a matter of how various elements are structurally embedded in a practice (which in its turn may be embedded in more encompassing structures).⁵⁹ In this context it doesn't make sense to construe 'meaning', 'the outside world', 'knowledge', etc. outside a particular practice, for example:

- a rule, the verbal expression/representation of that rule, the actual behavior that does or does not follow that rule, the specific feelings of certainty that an agent may feel while following a rule, etc. are all integral parts of a specific rule-following practice; the relations between these elements are *sui generis* and not reducible;
- a word qua linguistic item, the use of the word in this or that LG, perhaps various mental or neuro-physical phenomena, perhaps the extra-linguistic reference of the word (depending on the word), are all related within the internal structure of a LG and it makes no sense to 'dig deeper';
- the notion of theorem, the notion of proof, the notion of truth, the behavioral patterns that constitute methods for construing and/or perusing proofs are -in a Wittgensteinian account- all structurally related within the proving practices that are characteristic of whatever mathematical FoL is at hand.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ This conception of meaning/sense as embedding plays a crucial role in chapter 3 below.

⁶⁰ Cf. LW's comments on Gödel's incompleteness results (*BGM1*, Anhang 3, §§8-19). See also chapter 3, section 4.3.

The line of thought developed in the above establishes (1) that a holistic and structuralistic interpretation of LW's concepts of LG and FoL is the only charitable one, i.e. the only one that allows for a coherent reading of LW's account, and (2) how LW's structuralism-cum-holism -in principle- accounts for the relations between the various dimensions involved within a practice, while avoiding the pitfalls associated with various monisms and dualisms.

5.4 The irreducibility of practice, ontological contingency and the problem of relativism

In sections 5.1 through 5.3 here above, I have shown that a Wittgensteinian implementation of the concept of 'practice' does not boil down to a reduction to practice, and thus avoids the myth of the giving. The problem is thus no longer the relation between agent, mental content and the world, but there still may be a problem with the relation between individual practices (incl. LGs) and the encompassing structures that lie beyond the single LG, structures that we will refer to as FoLs, for the sake of convenience.

It is clear that FoLs do not only consist of practices, but practices appear to have a predominant status within them, in the sense that *practice appears to be irreducible*. As is suggested by the hurly-burly remark (excerpt #9), FoLs are inherently somewhat ambiguous as to the local-global dimension:

- (1) on the one hand, they are the ultimate horizon for structural embedding, beyond the single 'local' practice;
- (2) on the other hand, fragmentation into local practices is inherent to them.

To the extent that we are allowed to project our ontological concerns onto LW's discourse, this means that LW puts contingency at the heart of metaphysics: contingent circumstances serve as ultimate bedrock.⁶¹

This is also the point of the various counterfactuals, whether physical (see the cases of the disappearing beans and the spontaneously mutating ink marks in section 4.6) or cultural (think of the bizarre tribes of section 4.7): all of the aspects of what

⁶¹ Cf. also the magnificent passage *ÜG* §§94-99, in which LW develops the image of the riverbed, in which some parts remain solid for some time and then become fluid again. As this passage is actually about propositions and *Weltbilder*, and does not refer to encompassing practices/FoLs, it is not immediately relevant here, though the image could be easily be expanded in this vein. For further discussion of the context and the intertext, as well as the philosophical consequences, of this excerpt, I refer to David Stern's wonderfully rich article 'Heraclitus' and Wittgenstein's River Images: Stepping Twice Into the Same River' (Stern 1991).

happen to be 'our Forms of Life'/'our lives'/etc. could perhaps have been different, and even the most solid-looking aspects of our lives (etc.) depend on the contingent. A good case in point is Steiner's analysis of LW's remarks on the possibility to continue mathematics with Goldbach's theorem considered as true or as not true (Steiner 2009:13-14). Steiner explicitly and convincingly demonstrates how LW does not claim that we are simply free to agree to go this or that way, that -I'm paraphrasing in terms of the present study- we are rather always already severely limited by the encompassing holistic structures that are the result of a particular natural history (including the physical and biological aspects), and that it therefore would be simply wrong to consider LW a social-constructivist in any real sense of the term.

6. Conclusions

My purpose was to investigate how the lines of thought that LW, an acknowledged predecessor of the practice turn, formulated in terms of LG, FoL and related terms, may still contribute to ontological issues surround the use of the term 'practice' in various present-day academic endeavors:

- In section 1, I showed that LW's notion of 'LG' can safely be viewed as the prototype of the concept of 'practice' (language is a lot less central concept than its name would suggest).
- On the basis of a close reading of a number of excerpts (section 2) and an analysis of the way LW puts the key concepts under scrutiny to work within the context of the lines of thought in which they occur (section 3), I have argued that both LG and FoL ⁶² are multidimensional structures that inherently imply linguistic, pragmatic, cognitive, social/cultural, epistemic, biological, but also physical aspects (section 4).
- This observation gave rise to an argumentation (section 5) that lead to the following conclusions:

⁶²The notions of 'language game' and 'form of life' are not full-blown technical terms and are only loosely distinguished from each other ('game' evokes boundaries, finiteness, locality, whereas 'Form of Life' evokes less clear boundaries and global, holistic features).

- a Wittgensteinian concept of practice is inherently holistic, i.e. consists of an encompassing structure within which a number of elements are related to each other;
- the only way to interpret LW's accounts in such a way that *both* the claim that practices are 'ultimate grounds', *and* the holistic implementation of the concept make sense, is to adopt a radically structuralistic reading, according to which the relations between behavioral patterns, rules, linguistic meanings, representations, agents, feelings and the outside world are 'internal'/'structural' in the strong sense of the word: the relations determine the very identity of the variables.
- Finally, I pointed out that the ontological irreducibility of practice implies that the contingency that comes with historical and cultural variation, as well the fragmentation of our FoLs into a hurly-burly of local practices, is an inherent part of the ontological 'given', on a par with physical and biological contingency and givenness. This means that contingency has to be accepted at the heart of ontology.⁶³

⁶³Since a decade or so, **relativism** is a hot topic again, as can be seen from the sheer volume of important publications on the topic (for instance: Boghossian 2006; Hales 2011; Schantz and Seidel 2011; Kusch 2013; Kusch 2016), and it looks like LW's heritage is playing a solid role in the discussions.

Chapter 2. The cobbler's nails and the boat on the beach.

The What and the Who of Dasein.

Critical reflections on practice, objecthood and agency.

This chapter presents a careful paraphrase of, and a number of critical reflections on, a few lines of thought in Martin Heidegger's (MH's) analysis of the structure of everyday 'In-der-Welt-sein' in *Sein und Zeit* (*S&Z*), especially the 'pragmatic' lines of thought concerning the concepts of objecthood (the 'Vorhandenheit-Zuhandenheit' distinction) and agency ('Selbstsein', 'Mitsein' and 'das Man') and the problem of the transcendence of the world.⁶⁴ My purpose is to show:

- the internal coherence and the philosophical relevance of these lines of thought, even beyond what MH chose to elaborate on in *S&Z*, and especially their importance for contemporary practice-oriented work;
- that MH did not fully exploit the intrinsic potential of these lines of thought, due to an inappropriate bias in his phenomenological analysis of everyday practice;
- that this bias is ultimately due to MH's commitment to the notions of 'everydayness' and 'authenticity'.

1. Background: *Sein und Zeit*

Giving a full-fledged introduction to the thematically rich and much commented on classic that is *S&Z* can obviously not be the aim in this study. Still, in order to make this contribution accessible to readers who are not (very) familiar with Heidegger, and in order to already set the tone for the analyses to come, I will briefly point out a few elements that will be useful to make sense of what follows.

⁶⁴ My paraphrase is inevitably not entirely fair with respect to MH's intentions. First, the lines of thought that are selected and isolated for the purposes of this analysis, are within their original context interwoven with other lines of thought that are not taken on board here, whereas they are present from the very beginning in MH's discourse. Furthermore, a large number of terminological/conceptual distinctions that MH introduces with an almost obsessive acrimony, cannot be reviewed here (for instance: it turned out I could make the points I needed to make without referring to MH's key concept 'disclosure', so I did). Still, I tried to make sure not to introduce extraneous materials into my paraphrase.

Method: phenomenology + heuristics

MH presents his *S&Z* (§7) as a development of Husserl's phenomenology (he formally defines his approach as follows: "Das, was sich zeigt, so wie es sich von ihm selbst her zeigt, von ihm selbst her sehen lassen"), and quotes Husserl's slogan "zu den Sachen selbst!". However, in stark contrast to Husserl, MH's phenomenology is inherently 'hermeneutic': to MH, things manifest themselves always already as 'interpreted', i.e. not 'first' as (for instance) sense-data and only 'afterwards' as a hammer.⁶⁵

Ontological diversity: Dasein vs. Vorhandenheit; Dasein as the starting point for ontology

MH's ultimate aim is ontological, what he is interested in, is Being (Sein) in general: what is it that makes entities whatever they are? or: what makes it possible for us to make sense of things?⁶⁶

One of the crucial insights underlying *S&Z* is the idea that not all beings/entities 'are' in the same way. The first distinction that MH operates in this regard is the one between (a) '**Vorhandenheit**' (the way objects are, as we perceive them around us), and (b) '**Dasein**' (the specific kind of being that 'we' are, as the ones to whom things manifest themselves).

MH explains that his ontological endeavor will have to start from a phenomenological analysis of Dasein, because our *Dasein is the locus of all phenomenality* (phenomena manifest themselves to us).

Dasein as in-der-Welt-sein and as Mitsein

MH's actual analysis of Dasein kicks off with the idea that Dasein is fundamentally "being-in-the-world" (In-der-Welt-sein): our very Being presupposes that we are involved with things around us. MH introduces the terms 'Sorge' and 'besorgen' to express this idea (*S&Z*, pp. 56-57): the verb '**besorgen**' means something like '**taking care (of business)**', in a very general sense, and includes a wide range of activities and attitudes, amongst which: producing something, using something, undertaking something, questioning, informing, discussing, determining, losing something, and even not-doing something ... The corresponding noun 'Sorge' means something like 'care' (as in 'taking care of...' or 'caring about') or more generally 'concern' (as in 'being concerned with' and in 'being concerned about'), but also has

⁶⁵ For the complexity of the relation between MH's and Husserl's phenomenologies, cf. Dostal 2006.

⁶⁶ "Heidegger's primary concern is to raise the question of being –to make sense of our ability to make sense of things [...]" (Dreyfus 1991:10); cf. also Sheehan 2013:382–383.

emotional/attitudinal connotations, which are not directly relevant to our purposes here.

It is important to understand that MH is construing a structural account of Dasein:

- ‘Sorge’ is *by definition* ‘the being of our Dasein’, as ‘being-in-the-world-as-a-potentiality’, in other words: *our ‘taking-care-of-business’ = our very being*;
- at the same time Dasein is also fundamentally being-with-others (“Mitsein”): it is part of our being qua Dasein that we relate to other people.⁶⁷

With these profoundly **structuralist** and **holistic** moves MH squarely distances himself not only from Cartesianism, but also and especially from Husserl’s phenomenology, which starts from an isolated transcendental subject and a ‘bracketing’ of the world.

Average everydayness

At the beginning of *S&Z*, MH argues that our analysis of the structure of Dasein should start with our **average**⁶⁸ **everyday being-in-the-world**, for methodological reasons: if we started from a more theoretical perspective, we would fall prey to our tendency to immediately ‘jump to’ (‘überspringen’) explanations that are based on a traditional conceptualization, and would thus immediately lose our radically phenomenological perspective.

In order to distinguish his view of this everyday way of actively being-in-the-world from the traditional subject-object relation, MH introduces the following terminology:

- the way in which we live our everyday lives is ‘besorgende **Umgang**’: we are not passive subjects who perceive our world, we actively deal with things, things are part of our business;⁶⁹

⁶⁷ I use the term **structuralism** in the fundamental sense of ‘an approach in which relations between elements of structure determine their identity’. Structuralism in this sense is a type of anti-reductionism, though not in the same sense that holism is. I understand **holism** as an approach in which various dimensions are equiprimordial, and none of them can be reduced to any of the other ones. For the notions ‘structuralism’ and ‘holism’ applied to Wittgenstein, see chapter 1, section 5.3.

⁶⁸ Note that the ‘everyday vs. non-everyday’ distinction is being complicated by the extra distinction ‘average vs. non-average’ (see section 5.5 below).

⁶⁹ I will often translate this term loosely as “taking care of business” or simply our “business”. Strictly speaking, ‘taking care of business’ would be a more appropriate translation of simply ‘besorgen’; Dreyfus translates *Umgang* with ‘dealing with’. But in the context of ‘everydayness’ (to which we will stick until the end of this chapter), the difference is not important (everyday *besorgen* is *Umgang*), so I will opt for ease of exposition and avoid the often somewhat awkward translation ‘dealing with’.

- the world with which we deal in our everyday lives, is our **Umwelt** / the world-around(-us): we do not move about in a neutral infinite 3D space, but in a world that fits our business / concerns;
- the way in which we perceive everyday things is called **Umsicht** / seeing-around-ourselves: we normally do not just observe things in a detached way, but deal with things and perceive these things within the context of our dealings;
- the way in which we understand/know things in everyday life is called **verstehen**: we do not understand our world on the basis of propositional/discursive knowledge resulting from detached thinking, and even when we occasionally switch to discursive thinking, this thinking still is completely interwoven with the activities in which we are involved.

2. The What of Dasein I: Zuhandenheit

Against the background sketched here above, we can now start to develop our account of the lines of thought in *S&Z* that are directly relevant to the overall aims of the present study. Following the structure of MH's own presentation, I will first discuss the issue of objecthood within the context of our being-in-the-world, starting with his analysis of everyday practice. As is often the case, it turned out to be fruitful to focus on MH's use of examples.

2.1 Example 1: the hammer & hammering / the door & opening the door (Zuhandenes – Zeug) (*S&Z* §15, pp. 68-69)

MH makes us start from the following observation: normally, the things involved in our 'business' seamlessly fit in with whatever is this business, e.g. the door handle seamlessly fits our OPENING THE DOOR, the hammer (as well as the nail and the board) fits our HAMMERING activity: things used/encountered in this way are –in a certain sense– inconspicuous and their 'objective' properties are likewise inconspicuous. Thus, things 'normally' / 'in our everyday life' appear to us in this very specific way: inconspicuously, as completely intertwined with our actions, our everyday business.

MH calls the things encountered in this way 'Zeug' (equipment/tool(s)) and their specific mode of being / their ontological status "**Zuhandenheit**" ("readiness-at-

hand" / "availability").⁷⁰ In other words: the relation between 'business at hand' and 'things at hand' is a structural one; Zuhandenheit is inherently being-inherent-to-our-business.

After defining Dasein out of the domain of pure Vorhandenheit, MH now also detaches everyday things from that ontological domain: it is not the case that a door handle manifests itself to us as an isolated object with such and such properties.

2.2 Example 2: Heidegger's office (S&Z §15, pp. 68-69)

MH uses this example to introduce the idea that things always manifest themselves as part of a whole. The example refers (implicitly but evidently) to the archetypical scene of phenomenology, i.e. 'what the phenomenologist sees while sitting behind his desk'. MH starts with an enumeration of the things he sees around him: stationery, pen, ink, paper, blotter, desk, lamp, furniture, windows, doors, room. MH then remarks that the individual things never 'first' manifest themselves as such and 'only then' fill the room, as the sum of a number of real objects; on the contrary, according to MH, we 'first' perceive the room, not as a geometrical space, but as 'dwelling equipment' (Wohnzeug): this dwelling equipment shows a certain 'setup'/'Einrichtung' and within this overall Einrichtung the individual things manifest themselves.

2.3 Example 3: the shoemaker's business (S&Z §15, pp. 69-71)

This example is used to introduce a whole series of relations that together make up the relational character of Zuhandenheit.⁷¹ MH distinguishes i.a. the following types of things within the business of the shoemaker:

- the shoemaker's **tools** (in the strict sense of the word): hammers, needles, etc., as well as the workshop as a whole, have a specific function within the shoemaker's everyday business: they are all at the service of the work (the shoes);
- the shoemaker's **work (Wozu)**, i.e. the shoes: the shoes are the purpose of the shoemaker's business; but they have in their turn a purpose, i.e. being worn by a

⁷⁰ The terminology is not very transparent, especially not in the various English translations. Note that the translations 'equipment' and 'tools' are misleading: zuhandenes does not only include tools in the strict sense, but also ingredients, products, infrastructure, etc. In what follows, I will either use MH's German terminology or a loose English paraphrase.

⁷¹ The craftsman in his workshop is –just like the philosopher behind his desk– an archetypical example (cf. the examples of the hammer, the toolbox and the workshop already quoted above).

user; this chain of goal-oriented relations has an end point: ultimately everything occurs for the sake (**um... willen**) of Dasein itself;

- the **materials (Woraus)** that are used in SHOEMAKING, i.e. leather, nails, ... : these materials are in their turn made out of other materials and so refer in their turn to other activities and materials (SLAUGHTERING and SKINNING of animals, MINING and FORGING of iron, etc.); thus, the everyday activity of SHOEMAKING already refers to the whole of **nature**, here to be understood as part of the Umwelt corresponding to our everyday business;⁷²
- **the public world**: as mentioned, the goal/purpose of SHOEMAKING (the shoes) as such already refers to the user of the shoes and the ways in which he will use them within his everyday business (WALKING, ...), and thus also to streets, the city, other trades and businesses, etc., i.e. to what MH calls the public world ("öffentliche Welt").

In this way MH fleshes out his hermeneutic and holistic view of the 'world' as a structural part of our everyday 'business': things are an intrinsic part of a whole that makes them meaningful.⁷³

2.4 Zuhandenheit as structure

Zuhandenheit is analysed as a fundamentally **relational** way of being, in which every individual thing immediately 'refers' to other things':⁷⁴

- zuhandene things do not occur in isolation, but within the framework of a whole consisting of other similar things (Zeug/equipment is in the first place a

⁷² Thus, MH construes even the moon and the sun as a kind of zuhandenes.

⁷³ MH's view of 'worldliness' is the exact opposite of the Cartesian notion of the world as an in se meaningless three-dimensional 'res extensa' (*S&Z* §§19-21). In contrast to this traditional conception, MH develops an alternative version of the concept of 'space' (*S&Z* §§22-24), i.a. characterized by the functional relations between the things themselves and by distance and orientation with respect to a center as fundamental features of the spatiality inherent in Dasein. -- Ninety years after the publication of *S&Z* and after several decades of phenomenology à la Merleau-Ponty and various cognitive sciences, these remarks have become almost trivial. However, it remains important to remember that MH construes these 'spatial' aspects as 'primary' ones: these are aspects of the everyday world as it is, and not aspects of human cognition, as biological and/or cultural epiphenomena of the essentially physical 3D world of meaningless matter.

⁷⁴ MH introduces an impressive terminological/conceptual apparatus to capture the relational of Zuhandenheit, cf. e.g. Bewandtniss, Verweisung, Bedeutsamkeit, ...; plus a whole series of derivative terms; plus a technical implementation of a number of prepositions (Um zu, Um...willen, Wozu, Woraus, mit...bei...). Within the limits of this chapter I cannot specifically deal with all this and can only try to capture the core of his argument in a loose paraphrase.

collective noun); MH calls such a whole a '**Zeugganzheit**' (e.g. the shoemaker's toolbox);

- zuhandene things immediately refer to the purpose they serve ('**Um-Zu**'); each tool has its own function within the toolbox and within the corresponding action (e.g. a hammer is used for hammering, e.g. for hammering nails into the soles of a shoe); the exact function of something within such a whole (its **Bewandtnis**) defines the being of that 'zuhandenes' something (S&Z §18);
- the whole of all these relations (**Verweisung**; S&Z §17) is what makes each thing as such (as well as the world as a whole) meaningful/significant; MH calls this **Bedeutsamkeit** and specifies that it is this significance/**relevance** which makes the world the world (S&Z §18).⁷⁵

2.5 Critical notes: Heidegger's approach to Zuhandenheit qua phenomenological analysis

Despite his methodological claim to an approach that starts from a phenomenology of everyday activity, MH does not really analyse this behaviour as a phenomenon:

- the examples OPENING THE DOOR and HAMMERING mentioned under 1 are basic actions, but presented in a completely stylized and decontextualized way (it looks as if MH did not make the effort to watch (or even imagine) someone opening a door);
- in example 2, he does evoke a scene in which he OBSERVES his writing 'equipment', but not while he is WRITING;
- in example 3, he talks about anything that is closely or remotely related to the shoemaker's business, but from a bird's eye view, and not from the point of view of, for instance, the shoemaker while he is HAMMERING.

This approach has a number of consequences for the ontology that emerges from it.

(1) The dynamics of Zuhandenheit

Let me first present an alternative 'story' to MH's example 2. Follow what happens to the contents of -say- the visual field of either an observer or of writer MH himself:

MH looks towards the ceiling, trying to formulate the paragraph about his desk and his room. He then looks and moves his right hand towards the right-hand side of his desk, and grabs his pen, takes off the cap with his left hand and puts it down to his left side; his eyes now turn

⁷⁵ 'Bedeutsamkeit' has a very similar function to the function of the concept of '**relevance**' in other work of mine (Scheppers 2003; Scheppers 2011:281-283 et passim).

towards the black book; he moves the pen towards the open page in his black book and starts writing. After about a minute he lays down his pen, etc.

A comparison of the above little sketch with MH's examples should immediately show that MH does not focus on the dynamics of our actions and the corresponding shifts of prominence of the things involved:

- a) MH never mentions the dynamics of **appearance and disappearance** of objects on the scene of our activities. For him, things are inconspicuously 'zuhanden' and that's it. The difference between the presence/function of the pen while it is in our hand (Inhandenheit?) and the presence/function of the pen once we stop writing (Aushandenheit?) is not interesting to him. Note that MH's conception of an undifferentiated 'inconspicuousness' does not cover these shifts.
- b) The relevance of zuhandene things is also related to the dynamics of practice: during the course of a more or less complex action, items are not always relevant in the same way. This observation immediately gives rise to dimensions of relevance that are not available in MH's account:
 - the **local vs. global** dimension of relevance/presence: while making shoe S, nail N is only very locally relevant/present (during the hammering of N), whereas shoe S and hammer H (each in its own way) remain relevant throughout the hammering;
 - the **foreground-background** dimension of relevance/presence and its dynamics: at the moment nail N is hammered, it is at the foreground of the scene; the floor of the workshop can be said to be (in some sense) 'present' at the same time, but in the background.
- c) Zuhandenheit is also characterized by qualitative heterogeneity, depending on the type of practice and depending on the role of the thing within the practice: WRITING AN ARTICLE ABOUT THE HIGGS BOSON will not imply the same type of 'objects' as FIGHTING A BOXING MATCH. Depending on the practice, or the phase of a practice the agent is at, things will be relevant in various roles: as an ingredient, as a finished product, as an obstacle, ...

Only by completely ignoring these aspects MH can assert the undifferentiated 'inconspicuousness' of all zuhandene things, and -as we will argue further on- maintain a clear distinction between Zuhandenheit and Vorhandenheit.

(2) The heterogeneity of our everyday practices

MH mentions the fact that our everyday business is **fragmented and heterogeneous**:

S&Z, pp. 56-57

Das In-der-Welt-sein des Daseins hat sich mit dessen Faktizität je schon in bestimmte Weisen des In-Seins zerstreut oder gar zersplittert. Die Mannigfaltigkeit solcher Weisen des In-Seins läßt sich exemplarisch durch folgende Aufzählung anzeigen: zutunhaben mit etwas, herstellen von etwas, bestellen und pflegen von etwas, verwenden von etwas, aufgeben und in Verlust geraten lassen von etwas, unternehmen, durchsetzen, erkunden, befragen, betrachten, besprechen, bestimmen, ... Diese Weisen des In-Seins haben die noch eingehend zu charakterisierende Seinsart des *Besorgens*.

I call attention to the formula “zerstreut oder gar zersplittert, which suggest a negative evaluation of this **fragmentation** of ‘besorgen’ (see also section 6). In any case, the examples quoted above show that MH does not really deal with the diversity within our everyday business. By not really analyzing the specific phenomenologies of our everyday activities, MH underestimates the diversity of our everyday activities and the world(s) that go(es) with it.

Even in example 1, MH abstracts away from the fine-grained dynamics involved: the FOCUSING ON the door knob, the REACHING FOR it, the TURNING, the PULLING; GRABBING a nail with one hand and the hammer with other one, POSITIONING the nail wherever it is needed; the HAMMERING itself; etc. (note that failure is possible at all of these stages; see section 3.1 here below).

In example 2, MH does *not* describe his writing equipment *as writing equipment* at all: in that case (i.e. if he were really busy working at his desk), the resulting phenomenology would have been completely different. One wonders whether the windows would have been a part of the room at all, and the register of what is part of his environment would not have taken the shape of a linear list, but would have been articulated along the lines of the sub-actions that make up his work. In other words: MH describes his writing equipment not *qua* writing equipment, but *qua* ‘philosophizing equipment’ or even ‘equipment for looking around’.⁷⁶

In example 3, the same problems arise: in what way are all these relations relevant/significant for our everyday Umwelt? Whose Umwelt and what kind of ‘business’ are we talking about anyway? Not the business of the cobbler at work: at

⁷⁶ NB the term ‘*Wohnzeug*’ (S&Z p.68), which is in this context both remarkably radical and symptomatic. Symptomatic is the fact that for MH ‘*wohnen/dwelling*’ apparently is the prototypical case of everyday business, rather than concrete activities such as ‘*writing*’, ‘*doing the dishes*’ etc. (see also the list of remarkably abstract examples of ‘*In-Sein*’ that characterizes the fragmentation of our ‘*being-in-the-world*’ at S&Z p.56). Remarkably radical is the formation of the word ‘*dwelling equipment*’ itself, which opens perspectives that I will exploit in section 4.3 below.

the moment that MH's cobbler hammers nail N into shoe sole S in village V somewhere in the Black Forest, the steel mills in the Ruhr (and even hardware store H in V) are -qua actual relevance/significance- far away from his hammering practice.⁷⁷

Of course, I am not claiming that these relations are *never* relevant, because from a common sense point of view or from a sociological or economical point of view they obviously *are* relevant. But I do claim that they are not obviously and directly relevant from the point of view of the local phenomenology of the 'besorgen' of the cobbler in his workshop, and this is what MH set out to do.⁷⁸

(3) Consequence: the problem of the unity/uniqueness and transcendence of the world

Both (1) and (2) result in an altogether very traditional top-down perspective, in which macroscopic aspects are emphasized and the relation between the micro-level and the macro-level never becomes problematic. However, it remains to be seen whether/how exactly the Umwelt of 'hammering away in the Black Forrest' converges with the Umwelt of 'philosophizing away at the office' into an encompassing 'Welt'. In other words: MH gets his notion of 'the world' as something unique for free, in exactly the same way he got his notion of 'for Dasein's sake itself' (as the goal of all our business) for free, and not as the result of an actual phenomenological analysis of actual everyday practices. The question needs to be asked whether MH did his homework as a phenomenologist: Are the references quoted in example 2 properly phenomenal? Is this type of analysis 'phenomenological' at all? Note that these critical reflections are not targeting the points MH intends to make with them; my only aim is to point out that MH's own approach could have yielded much more radical results, if he really had followed the method as he set out.

⁷⁷ NB that the nails -phenomenologically speaking- could have been made by gnomes at night, from their own spit. The point is: this would not change anything about the local phenomenology of the cobbler working at his workshop.

⁷⁸ In other words: MH is guilty of exactly the kind of methodological "überspringen" that he warns against in S&Z pp. 65-66.

3. The What of Dasein II: perturbations of Zuhandenheit

Throughout *S&Z* MH touches several times upon the following problem: if things are normally 'zuhanden', where does the traditional notion of 'Vorhandenheit' -i.e. the idea that objects 'are out there / 'exist', whether we are concerned with them or not- come from? In essence, this is also what he calls 'the problem of the transcendence of the world' (see below): if our world 'normally' is our Umwelt and hence corresponds to our everyday business, why should there be a single and unique world that is as it is, independently from our activities?

Already in *S&Z* §13 (p.61) MH suggests that it only becomes possible to see things as 'vorhanden' when a deficiency occurs in our normal way of being 'umsichtig'-ly concerned with our Umwelt, and we stop our activities to dwell upon these things as such.

All of this is quite easy to understand within the conceptual framework we sketched above: we are -by definition- not able to get out of the framework of Dasein and the 'besorgen'/'being concerned' that co-defines Dasein, but we can -in principle- get out of the 'everydayness' within which 'Zuhandenheit' occurs.

3.1 Perturbations of Zuhandenheit (*S&Z* §16)

We have seen above that within our everyday business things are inconspicuously interwoven with our practices. Only when things go wrong, we notice them (*S&Z* §16):

- within our everyday practice something becomes **obvious** when it turns out to be unusable: damaged, too heavy, too thin, too ... (*S&Z* p.73 "Auffälllichkeit");
- within our everyday practice something becomes **obtrusive** when it is not there when we need it (*S&Z* p.73 "Aufdringlichkeit");
- within our everyday practice something becomes an **obstacle** when it stands in our way and interferes with our business (*S&Z* p.74 "Aufsässigkeit").

These perturbations have -according to MH- consequences for the way in which these things manifest themselves to us: in a certain sense, Dasein leaves its implicit and purely practical relationship (Umsicht) to its Umwelt, so as to take a closer look and perhaps to reflect (überlegen) on what exactly the problem is and on how to solve it; the thing itself gets somewhat isolated of its primary context (the Zeugganzheit) and enters our field of vision 'as itself'.

One might be tempted to say that this situation is already 'Vorhandenheit' or at least that Vorhandenheit announces itself already. However, MH carefully explains that the being of the things in these cases still cannot be viewed as cases of 'mere existence' (Vorhandenheit), as it is still fully determined by our activity at hand: that the door handle is broken will only appear to me when I try to open the door.⁷⁹

3.2 Just looking around - contemplation (S&Z §36)

In S&Z §36, in the context of an explanation of 'curiosity', MH mentions another case in which Dasein stops being occupied by its everyday business (either because one is having a break or because one is ready) and therefore things stop being zuhanden: JUST LOOKING AROUND. One looks around without being interested in the being of things (they have no importance). This idle curiosity is -according to MH- the basis for the whole philosophical tradition up until and including Husserl.

3.3 Critical notes: the complexity and heterogeneity of everyday practices

MH's account of the various ways in which everyday activities can be interrupted or perturbed and the effect of this on the way things manifest themselves to us are interesting and phenomenologically correct.

However, because of the non-dynamic birds-eye view he adopts, MH overestimates the homogeneity of the supposed inconspicuousness of things within our 'normal' business and the conspicuousness of things when something goes wrong: things often go wrong to a certain degree, and it is part of our everyday practices to deal with minor perturbations.

Similarly: how is JUST LOOKING AROUND not an everyday practice? The phenomenology of JUST LOOKING AROUND may be a somewhat less self-evident example than HAMMERING nails into a shoe and may be a challenge to any analytical technique. Still, we can observe that this activity shares a number of structural features with any other type of everyday activity:

- the same overall 'preparation-focus-coda' pattern⁸⁰ (in this case for instance: FETCH BEER from fridge & SIT DOWN in comfortable chair close to the window - JUST LOOK AROUND & DRINK beer - THROW AWAY empty can & "back to work";

⁷⁹ MH adds that these cases *do* give us access to the 'worldliness of the world'. They make us aware of the fact that things intrinsically are part of a world: only when the door handle is broken or gone, do we become aware of the fact that it is an essential part of our activity of opening a door. But that is not the same thing as Vorhandenheit.

⁸⁰ Cf. Jackendoff 2007:117-143; Scheppers 2011:275; 312-313.

compare: FETCH NAILS, HAMMER & SHOE - HAMMER NAILS INTO SHOE - CLEAR AWAY TOOLS & REPAIRED SHOE);

- the same flux of things appearing on and disappearing from the scene: “Ha: a large truck that is. It’s gone. Children crossing the street. A tram. Where’s my beer? ...”;
- the same cultural contingency and diversity (‘LOOKING THROUGH THE WINDOW with a can of beer’ vs. ‘ZAZEN MEDITATION’ vs. ‘Husserl is DOING PHENOMENOLOGY’ could all be labeled as sub-categories of JUST LOOKING AROUND, but each has its own contingent cultural features).⁸¹

Also note that it is simply not true that the relational structure that makes up our world (Umwelt) suddenly disappears whenever we just look around: we do not suddenly see sense-data or bundles of properties; a passing car is still a car and a can of beer a can of beer. In other words: MH’s basic account of objecthood in terms of *Zuhandenheit* easily survives the apparent challenge of the perturbations of everyday practice and of apparent ‘doing nothing’.

4. The Umschlag of our everyday business, *Vorhandenheit*, and the status of science as practice

So far we have seen how MH sketches a rather convincing picture according to which the ways in which things manifest themselves to us, are structurally related to the functions these things have within our practices (if anything, the criticism I offered in the above targeted those aspects that seemed to mitigate the validity of the picture). Even in those moments in which our practices break down and we are forced to pay attention to our tools instead of just using them, our relation to them is still pervasively mediated by whatever practice is at hand. However, MH insists that this is only the case in the context of ‘everyday’ practices, and that things are different once we leave the realm of the everyday.

⁸¹ Cf. Scharmer and Varela 2000 for the specificity of Husserl's phenomenological technique as well as other 'meditation' techniques.

4.1 Differences/resemblances between the theoretical and the practical attitudes

Already in §15 of *S&Z* MH briefly addressed the differences between theory and - what he considers to be- our everyday practices:

S&Z § 15, p. 69

Das »praktische« Verhalten ist nicht »atheoretisch« im Sinne der Sichtlosigkeit, und sein Unterschied gegen das theoretische Verhalten liegt nicht nur darin, daß hier betrachtet und dort *gehandelt* wird, und daß das Handeln, um nicht blind zu bleiben, theoretisches Erkennen anwendet, sondern das Betrachten ist so ursprünglich ein Besorgen, wie das Handeln seine Sicht hat. Das theoretische Verhalten ist unumsichtiges Nur-hinsehen. Das Hinsehen ist, weil unumsichtig, nicht regellos, seinen Kanon bildet es sich in der Methode.

MH points out a potential misunderstanding: theory is also a kind of practice ("besorgen") - that's not the difference; the difference is that the perception ("Sicht") involved is not 'Umsicht', but a kind of 'just looking'. I believe this analysis -though not incoherent- is biased and ultimately mistaken (see below).

4.2 The theoretical attitude and *Vorhandenheit* (*S&Z* §69)

MH explicitly returns to these issues in *S&Z* §69 "Die Zeitlichkeit des In-der-Welt-seins und das Problem der Transzendenz der Welt". From this interesting but difficult section we can retain the following points concerning the **Umschlag** of our everyday 'umsichtige' activities towards a 'theoretical' attitude, which is necessary for there to be *Vorhandenheit*:⁸²

- our everyday praxis comes to a complete stop, which has for a consequence that (1) our vision, which is normally fully absorbed within our everyday business (*Umsicht*), suddenly has become free, and (2) the relations that normally make up the being of *zuhandenes*, suddenly are not relevant anymore;
- theoretical business thus includes the following twofold activity: (1) an active decontextualization of things out of the context of the normal *Umwelt* and (2) an active recontextualization of things in the context of 'nature', as stipulated ('projected') by theoretical activities;
- MH calls the activity specific to theoretical business 'thematization': in our theoretical praxis (our non-*umsichtige* business), things are made into a 'theme'

⁸² For further discussion, see section 6 below.

without being integrated into a further chain of everyday goal-oriented relations; thus, things are made into objects; thematization is objectivation.⁸³

4.3 Critical note: the (non?)-everyday business of the scientist and the transcendence of the world

All this is utterly coherent but not unproblematic: the whole construction depends on the presupposition that theoretical business is fundamentally different from everyday business. This presupposed difference becomes even more problematic in the light of the following (correct!) observations on the part of MH himself:

- scientific business -of course- implies its own practices (experimental set-ups, archeological digs, writing articles, ...);
- everyday practice has its own form of 'thematization' (?): whenever something goes wrong or whenever our activities require planning, we do reflect, in a way that closely resembles 'objectivation' (cf. supra).

It is a mystery to me why *Vorhandenheit* (the 'objective' way of being out there) cannot simply be seen as the *Umwelt* that corresponds to scientific practices. In the prolongation of MH's remarkable concept of '*Wohnzeug*', mentioned above, I wonder: if *Wohnzeug* is a viable concept, why then not '**Philosophierzeug**' or '**Observierzeug**', or even -why not?- '**Sehzeug**' (and I don't mean 'glasses' or something similar, I mean: the *Umwelt* that appears when my 'business' is simply SEEING)?

In other words, it is a mystery to me why science cannot then be viewed as the collection of everyday practices of the scientist:⁸⁴ if one takes into account all the 'everyday' aspects of scientific practice qua everyday practice, what exactly would be left as non-everyday in it? The difference clearly does not follow from any kind of phenomenological analysis on the part of MH, but has been stipulated from the outset, despite what the analysis suggests.

⁸³ This does not solve MH's problem of the transcendence of the world. For the present purposes, it is not necessary to fully analyze the very dense and difficult paragraph in question. But even within a single, complex or less complex, historical practice *Umwelten* may vary drastically (compare the *Umwelt* of one of the engineers participating in the realization of a new cyclotron (say: while discussing budgets), and the *Umwelt* of a scientist analyzing results, some years later).

⁸⁴ By the way: note that 'science' is not homogeneous at all, and -correspondingly- generates different *Umwelten*: the objective world corresponding to Newton's theoretical practice is not exactly the same as Einstein's, let alone Lavoisier, Paracelsus and Anaxagoras.

This gives rise to the following question: what motivates MH to develop these lines of thought in a direction that is clearly at odds with his stated methodological program (start from a phenomenology of a everyday practice as the primary way of being)? The answer must be: MH must have an agenda, according to which (1) he wants to maintain the difference between everydayness and non-everydayness at all costs, and (2) he wants to consider theory at all costs as a fundamentally different way of being in the world from all other types of human endeavor.

This tension between a radically pragmatic strand, associated with average everydayness, and a more conservative 'realist' one, in connection with science, is also reflected in the exegetical literature, and especially in the various conceptions of MH's conception of 'truth'. For discussion and references, I simply refer to the case Dreyfus makes for his interpretation of MH as a 'robust realist' in 'How Heidegger defends the possibility of a correspondence theory of truth with respect to the entities of natural science' (Dreyfus 2001), his contribution to *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory* (Schatzki, Cetina, and von Savigny 2001). Dreyfus claims that MH defends a correspondence conception of (scientific) truth, rather than a 'deflationary realist' one, which would at first sight be a more likely companion to his practical holism: "[...] Heidegger pioneered the deflationary realist account of the everyday, he sought to establish a robust realist account of science" (Dreyfus 2001:159). Dreyfus explains this as follows:

Heidegger seems to agree with the deflationary realists that, while entities show up as independent of us, the being or intelligibility of entities depends on our practices. So any talk of things in themselves must be put in scare quotes. Thus, Heidegger says of natural entities:

It must be stated that entities as entities are 'in themselves' and independent of any apprehension of them; yet, the being of entities is found only in encounter and can be explained, made understandable, only from the phenomenal exhibition and interpretation of the structure of encounter (Heidegger 1985a:217)⁸⁵.

And he seems even more deflationary when he adds:

Of course only as long as Dasein [human being] is (that is, only as long as an understanding of being is ontically possible), 'is there' being. When Dasein does not exist, 'independence' 'is' not either, nor 'is' the 'in-itself (Heidegger 1962:255)⁸⁶.

(Dreyfus 2001:159)

⁸⁵ Dreyfus' reference is to: "Heidegger, M. (1985a) *The History of the Concept of Time*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press."

⁸⁶ Dreyfus' reference is to: "Heidegger, M. (1978) *Being and Time*, trans. J.Macquarie and E.Robinson, Oxford: Blackwell; 1962 edn New York: Harper and Row; 1996 edn, trans. J.Stambaugh, Albany: State University of New York."

But then, Heidegger performs a spectacular switchover/*Umschlag* to robust realism when it comes to rescue the special status of science, *Vorhandenheit* qua ‘objective’ objecthood, and truth qua correspondence to reality. Those who wish to affiliate with the practice turn, while continuing to adhere to realism, may be surprised to learn that they should perhaps start reading MH to see how this is done. I’ll come back to this issue in section 6 below and to the issue as to the underlying agenda in section 7.

5. The ‘Who’ of Dasein (on agency and sociality)

So far we have only dealt with the What of Dasein, i.e. with the way our practices determine the ‘being’ of the items that occur in them, or -in more contemporary terms- the way MH construes objecthood within a practice-centred framework.

Let us now turn to the Who of Dasein (i.e. the issue of agency) and start from MH’s twofold answer to the question as to who Dasein is⁸⁷:

- Dasein is **the self** (*das Selbst*), as in ‘myself’, ‘yourself’, but also ‘anyoneself’ (see below). In this sense, we can say that Dasein qua ‘business’/*Sorge* always already is ‘being-oneself’/*Selbstsein*, which is also related to the notion that Dasein is always responsible for implementing its own being (cf. terms such as “Zu-sein”, “Seinkönnen”, “Existenz”, etc.).
- Dasein is **the others**, who are explicitly not defined in opposition to the self, but in terms of the fact that they are ‘also there together with others’ (“auch mit da sein”), and therefore also are a self, also are ‘in-the world’, etc.

The issue is then to formulate the exact ontological status of ‘me’ and ‘the others’ within the framework of the “Analytik des Daseins”.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Already in *S&Z* §10 MH pointed out that Dasein should not be interpreted in terms of one of the ‘regional ontologies’ related to various sciences: as a psychological subject; as a biological/physical organism; as a legal person, etc. Throughout the above, it also became evident that Dasein -intrinsicly involved in-the-World- should not be considered as a Cartesian-Husserlian transcendental ego either. In *S&Z* §25 MH elaborates on the notion that Dasein should not primarily be analyzed in terms of an “I”, because an I is by definition contradistinct from (1) others, and (2) the world, which would make it unsuitable for the role he wants to attribute to Dasein.

⁸⁸ The chapter in which MH specifically deals with the ‘who’ of Dasein (*S&Z* §§25-27) is notoriously problematic: various commentators (e.g. Dreyfus 1991:141-144; Dreyfus 1995; Carman 2005) have pointed out that this chapter appears to be less thoroughly elaborated than other passages of *S&Z*, both qua text, and qua conceptual apparatus. Dreyfus says: “It thus raises the question, how one should interpret a philosophical text which is genuinely confused?” (Dreyfus 1995:423). Partly because of this, my paraphrase will necessarily be more heavy-handed than

5.1 Dasein as **Selbstsein** and **Mitsein**: the self and the others in the context of everyday being-in-the-world (S&Z §26)

MH's approaches the ontology of the 'Who' of Dasein in the same structuralistic-holistic manner as the 'What' (see section 2) and defines his basic concepts in terms of their mutual relations and by positioning them within the encompassing structure of Dasein. These relations are specific, and different from the other types of being:

- First of all, *we / the others are not 'vorhanden'*. This can be shown by means of an argument similar to the one that established that things are not primarily vorhanden: within our everyday business, the others always already show up as part of a network of relations, for instance (in the case of the shoemaker), as a client, as a provider, etc., or -more remotely, as we move through the public world- as owners of the things around us (MH quotes the example of a boat on the beach: even if the owner is not there, we perceive the boat as 'someone's boat', either of someone we know, or as a boat 'that we don't know').
- Secondly, *we / the others are not 'zuhanden' either*: the relations that constitute the being of others, are of a different nature than the usability/'Bewandtniss' of things.

As is his wont, MH develops an extensive terminological array (Mitsein; Miteinandersein; Mitdasein; Mitwelt; Fürsorge; Forsicht, Rücksicht; etc.) to express the specificity of this domain of the Who. In the context of this study I cannot offer a detailed analysis, and we will have to limit ourselves to the following generalities:

- Dasein is fundamentally **Mitsein**: it is part of the structure of our being that we are someone amongst others: I experience myself as belonging to the same kind of entities as the others (neither zuhanden, nor vorhanden).
- Dasein is fundamentally **Selbstsein**: it is also part of the structure of our being that we experience anyone (whether ourselves or someone else) as a 'self' (a 'who' and not a 'what'), i.e. an entity whose being is characterized by 'Dasein' (and everything that implies) as opposed to Vorhandenheit or Zuhandenheit.

Whereas the idea that an agent is a self may be unsurprising, it may be useful to emphasize the radical character of MH's conception of Dasein as

was the case in my analysis of the more transparent passages on Zuhandenheit (sections 2-4 above). For an account with similar purposes -though not always similar conclusions- to ours here, see Schatzki 2005.

inherently/essentially defined by its sociality as well.⁸⁹ MH calls the fact that the others and I share the status of Daseins 'Mitdasein', and stipulates that this implies - amongst other things- that the others (as they manifest themselves within the context of our business-in-the-world) are '**in the same world**' (S&Z §26, p.121),⁹⁰ which brings us back to the problem of the unity/uniqueness of the world, which we encountered already in section 2.5(3) above. I will come back to this problem in section 6 below.

5.2 Everyday being-oneself and 'das Man'/'the Anyone' (S&Z §27)

For his analysis of the What of Dasein (see sections 2 to 4 above), MH focused for starters on our 'everyday being-in-the-world'; similarly, he now also analyzes the Who of Dasein within the context of our everyday activities. Here as well, we have to remember that -for MH- our everyday business is characterized by a kind of 'being fully absorbed by' the activity at hand, which implies that our relation to things, but also to the others is fully absorbed in and intertwined with these activities.

From this point of view, MH quickly comes to the conclusion that the Dasein of everydayness is the impersonal 'Anyone' (das Man)⁹¹: a kind of Dasein in which it does not matter whether you, me or anybody else is the agent.

This notion of 'Anyone' is given an important but at the same time ambiguous role within MH's ontology of Dasein. I will isolate two separate lines of thought (or layers) within MH's discourse:

- a 'positive' view of Anyone as fundamental mimesis/role-taking;
- a 'negative' view of Anyone as inauthentic being-oneself.⁹²

⁸⁹ Cf. Schatzki's paraphrase: "I translate Mitsein as coexistence. For present purposes, moreover, I treat "coexistence" as equivalent to "sociality." "Sociality" denotes the fact, and character, of the presence, or better bearing, of others (other entities of the sort each of us is) in or on a human life." (Schatzki 2005:234).

⁹⁰ Cf. Schatzki's account of Mitdasein: "There are four basic ways other Daseins bear on a Dasein's existence: (a) one encounters them out of the world; (b) one acts toward them; (c) one shares with them the world in which one lives; and (d) worldhood is largely the same for all involved" (Schatzki 2005:234).

⁹¹ Das Man has been translated as '(the) They', '(the) One', 'People', etc. All of the translations lead to some degree of awkwardness. Within the context of the present chapter, I will adopt 'Anyone' (Blattner 2013), or keep the original German 'das Man'.

⁹² My paraphrase is a loose one, for reasons already mentioned. For the way I structure the contents, compare Dreyfus 1991:151-182.

5.3 Heidegger's 'positive' view of 'the Anyone' as fundamental mimesis

Our being-ourselves within our everyday business is fully absorbed in whatever we are doing', i.e. in -what I would like to call- 'our role'. For instance: while hammering, you are essentially a hammerer, and your individual 'self' is not relevant for that (it doesn't matter who's hammering, really). This is what MH means with his idea that our everyday self is a 'Manselbst'.

This conception of das Man is potentially a powerful contribution to a practice-based approach: MH formulates in essence a theory of -what I would call- 'mimesis' (in the etymological sense of role-taking) as the link between the individual person and the supra-individual practices that make their behavior, perception, discourse etc. coherent, significant and communicable (Scheppers 2004). Heidegger points out that das Man is in this sense a fundamental ontological-structural aspect of Dasein.⁹³ We can read this as follows: our practices are an irreducible part of our agency in particular and our personhood in general.⁹⁴

Let me highlight two crucial aspects of the phenomenology of agency that fall under this notion of das Man qua mimesis, and that both highlight the fact that the intentionality that characterizes human agency cannot be reduced to the individual agent/subject, but is inherently mediated by the practices at hand:

- First, the Manselbst is what gives us access to the significance of our everyday world: I understand what a hammer is (and what it is to hammer with it), and this understanding is not a matter of my individual Dasein; on the contrary, this understanding is essentially the same for you and for me, i.e. it is a matter of 'the Anyone' (das Man).
- Second, this same Manselbst is also what gives me access to the others: I understand the others in their everyday activities because they participate in the same 'Man' and the same public world and the practices that go with it (S&Z §26, pp. 123-125 on the "Erschlossenheit des Mitdaseins").⁹⁵

⁹³ S&Z §27, p.129: "Das Man ist ein Existenzial und gehört als ursprüngliches Phänomen zur positiven Verfassung des Daseins."

⁹⁴ MH is (sometimes) explicit about the pervasiveness of the mimetic aspect of das Man. Cf. the following remarkable quote in which he actually states that even authentic Dasein consists in an 'existential modification' of *das Man*: "Das eigentliche Selbstsein beruht nicht auf einem vom Man abgelösten Ausnahmezustand des Subjekts, sondern ist eine existenzielle Modifikation des Man als eines wesenhaften Existenzials" (S&Z p.130).

⁹⁵ This aspect can be 'translated' in terms of the notions of 'mirroring' and 'imitation' that play an increasingly important role in cognitive approaches. See e.g. the two large volumes Hurley and Chater 2005b and Hurley and Chater 2005a. For the link between MH's 'das Man' and these aspects of cognitive science, see Dreyfus 2013.

This mimesis, i.e. the fact that as agents we are 'essentially Anyone' in that our practices are essentially 'public'/shared, determines the very Being (i.e. its sense/intelligibility) of our practices, and the agents and Umwelten within them.

5.4 Heidegger's 'negative' view of 'the Anyone' (on *Eigentlichkeit*/authenticity)

At the same time, MH also describes 'the Anyone' in terms of the 'improper'/'inauthentic' Dasein. At this point it becomes necessary to introduce a pair of concepts that I have thus far been able to carefully avoid in my exposition, but that plays a central role within the global context of *S&Z*: **eigentlich (proper/authentic) vs. uneigentlich (improper/inauthentic)**.

The notion 'proper' ('eigentlich'), as in 'one's own' ('Eigen'), should -at first- be interpreted in a neutral way, avoiding the connotation of 'authenticity'. The term can be applied to any of the aspects of Dasein, but let's concentrate on the case of the proper self vs. the improper self:

- (i) the proper self has taken possession of its own Dasein and exploits its individual intrinsic potential **for his own sake**;
- (ii) the improper self lapses into a situation in which his being is fully subsumed in a non-individualized Dasein: 'the Anyone' ('das Man').

At first, MH pretends that the terms properness/improperness are purely descriptive, but soon enough the role of das Man as the opposite of the authentic Self prevails, and the ethical, moralistic, or -in any case- evaluative connotations (captured by the translation 'authenticity') take over, as becomes apparent when we look at the more specific terminology that is applied to the various modi of the 'improper'/'inauthentic' Dasein (*S&Z* §27, p.128): *Durchschnittlichkeit* (averageness, with the connotation of 'mediocrity'), *Einebnung* (with the connotation of 'conformism'), and of course the notorious key concepts of 'verfallen' (falling/lapsing) and 'Geworfenheit' (thrownness). In this context, 'das Man' functions as a levelling factor that gets the individual self into various deficient modi of Dasein (chatter, mediocrity, conformism, vain curiosity, ...). From this point onwards, MH's well-known and much imitated 'existentialist' discourse gets going, in which everydayness is systematically linked to inauthenticity and described in (more or less unambiguously) pejorative terms. This 'existentialist' discourse, however interesting in its own right, falls outside the scope of this study (and the present section should make clear why this is the case).

5.5 Critical notes: Heidegger and the phenomenology of agency

We have seen that MH's conception of Dasein as essentially Mitsein/sociality, plus his view of 'the Anyone' as a representation of the public/shared/mimetic side of our everyday being-in-the-world, constitute a potentially powerful pragmatic account of agency, which can easily be translated in more contemporary jargon:

- our practices and their corresponding 'pragmatic spaces'/Umwelten are shared/public;⁹⁶
- our personhood and agency, as well as our behavior and the objects involved in it, are mediated by our practices;
- insofar as we are agents, our personhood is not private but defined by our roles in the practice.

On the other hand, we have also observed tensions within this account which I will now briefly discuss.

(1) The incompatibility of Heidegger's two conceptions of 'das Man'

As we have seen, MH maintains two understandings of 'das Man' at the same time that take a lot of effort to read as even remotely compatible (cf. Carman 2005, already referred to):⁹⁷

- 'the Anyone' as the mimetic principle, i.e. the principle that enables the individual to take up roles (including his ability to present himself as an individual where required);
- 'the Anyone' as the improper/inauthentic self, i.e. that which forces the self out of his authentic being into grey conformism.

MH could have spared himself a lot of trouble and contortions, if he simply had chosen two different terms. Of course, the very fact that he did not do so, already suggests that he had his reasons for this choice. In any case, it should be clear that

⁹⁶ Note the interesting parallel with the objections that Wittgenstein formulates against the possibility of 'private' normativity (the so-called 'private language argument').

⁹⁷ For an excellent and detailed analysis of the conceptual contortions that result from MH's contamination of the descriptive and evaluative aspects of the *Eigentlichkeit-Uneigentlichkeit* dichotomy, I refer to Carman 2005. As an example of these complications, I briefly mention the trick with the adjective 'durchschnittlich'/average: MH sometimes does and sometimes doesn't add this qualification to the notion of 'everyday', which gives him a little bit of wiggle room so as to distinguish -whenever this suits him- between different kinds of everydayness (good/authentic vs. bad/inauthentic/average), and thus maintain a precarious impression of neutrality for his notion 'everydayness'. Contortions indeed.

these reasons are not the result of an analysis of everyday practice, but rather of the encompassing aim of his project.

It should be evident from the above that within MH's thought in *S&Z* there exist tensions between two perspectives:

- a purely phenomenological analysis of our everyday being-in-the-world, in which 'the Anyone' qua mimetic principle finds a natural context;
- an existentialist 'moralism of authenticity', in which a critique of 'the Anyone' qua conformism finds a home.

Why didn't MH keep these perspectives separate? Apparently, conflating them was part of his agenda, of the message he tried to convey. I will come back to this in section 7 below.

(2) Intentionality and the structure and dynamics of practice

The same lines of thought that I formulated by way of critical remarks on MH's account of the What of Dasein (section 2.5 above) appear to apply to his account of the Who of Dasein: apart from a few illustrations in passing, MH seems to have very little interest in detailed analysis of the actual relations that constitute our Mitdasein. MH skips the actual analysis and switches from our everyday 'local' and fragmented business to a global birds-eye overview without even noting it, and in the process simply avails himself of the notion Mitdasein, effectively bypassing the fragmentation that is inherent to our everyday practice. As was the case in sections 2.5 and 4.4, I argue that this implicit kind of 'Umschlag' is not legitimate from a phenomenological point of view.

In any case, this Umschlag allows MH to protect his notion of Self from collapsing under the weight of the 'Anyone's self'. The **intentions** underlying behavior -i.e. the answers we can give to the question 'why does agent X perform action A?'- form a hierarchy: 'X reaches for the knob on the cupboard door, to open the cupboard, in order to take out the nails, in order to hammer them into a shoe, because he is repairing shoes'. This hierarchy of intentions is obviously not a matter of the individuality of X himself and his acting 'for his own sake'; on the contrary, this hierarchy corresponds exactly to the 'syntactic' structure of the behavior itself and as such consists of patterns that are shared (as Dreyfus would say), or -in Heideggerian

terms- 'public'.⁹⁸ Our role in a practice thus determines our intentions and our behavior at the same time and in the same articulated way.⁹⁹

This effectively leaves no room for a separate realm of the 'authentic self', for whose sake everything we do should ultimately be done. Already in section 2.3 above, we introduced Heidegger's account of intentionality in terms of the 'wozu' (the goal of hammering is the finished shoe) and the 'um...willen' (ultimately all actions are for the sake of Dasein). The notion of 'for your own sake' is perhaps correct in some vague and almost circular sense: our practices generally do not tend to be contrary to self-preservation, some of our primary needs obviously serve as ultimate motivation for at least part of our activity, and preservation-related aims tend to take precedence over whatever other aims may be at hand (one tends to let go of hammer and nail when the elephant drops through the roof of the workshop). But it remains to be seen and shown how this *actually* relates to the inherently fragmented phenomenology of everyday taking-care-of-business, with its multiple roles, each repeatable across agents (cf. das Man), and each with their own goals, aims, attitudes etc.

6. Radical pragmatics, relativity and the transcendence of the world (S&Z §69)

So far I have paraphrased a few of MH's pragmatically oriented lines of thought concerning objecthood and agency, mostly taken from *Abschnitt 1* of *S&Z*. This paraphrase gave rise to a number of critical observations on my part, as well.

It is now time to try and bring these critical threads together, which will also allow for a confrontation with material about the 'transcendence of the world' taken from *Abschnitt 2* of *S&Z* (already briefly discussed in section 4.2 above).

⁹⁸ See my own publications Scheppers 2004, Scheppers 2003, Scheppers 2011:271-317, as well as my own 'unpublished' manuscripts Scheppers 2008b and Scheppers 2008a.

⁹⁹ With respect to the 'publicity' of these patterns, it may be interesting to mention that many practices consist of patterns that involve several roles at once, and thus determine the behavior of several agents at once (Scheppers 2011:293-294, 308-312, 373-429).

6.1 From the cobbler's shop to the world at large: fragmentation vs. unity

The very fact of introducing *Zuhandenheit* as the *basic* and *primary* way of being for things implies that there is a structural relation between practice and the world. We have seen how the *Umwelt* of our practices is held together by a web of relations: *Um-zu*, *Wo-zu*, *Um-willen*, etc. (in *S&Z* §69, p.364, MH comes back to this). In other words: the unity of the world depends on the relevance-relations inherent to our practices. So far, so good. But this view also opens the door for a profoundly **relativistic ontology**: if things essentially/substantially *are* whatever they are with respect to our everyday activities, activities essentially/substantially imply their own ontologies: REPAIRING SHOES implies such categories as hammers, nails, shoes with wholes vs. repaired shoes, etc. (= the local world of the cobbler at work; see section 2.3), whereas none of these play a role in MH's JUST-LOOKING-AROUND in his study (see section 2.2), let alone in BOXING A BOXING MATCH. Note that this ontological relativity not only operates across cultures, but also within a culture across persons, and within a person across his/her various activities, and even within a practice according to its internal dynamics. It is -phenomenologically speaking- not clear at all that these local *Umwelten* should give rise to the same encompassing global *Welt*. And this problem gets worse if we involve cases that are socio-culturally and/or materially more divergent (say: a victim of war and famine in Somalia, a hunter-gatherer, a Sufi mystic, ...).

6.2 Olafson, Dreyfus, Olafson again, Carman, Dreyfus again, and Schatzki on *das Man*, publicity, and the unity/uniqueness of the world

As far as I can see, MH does not thematize the unity and uniqueness of the world as a problem. I suppose that he assumes that the worlds/*Umwelten* that correspond to my everydayness and yours ultimately converge. However, a major debate on (more or less) precisely this issue originated between the Heidegger-scholars Frederick A. Olafson (Olafson 1987:70-72, 144-150; Olafson 1994; Olafson 1994a) Taylor Carman (Carman 1994) and Hubert Dreyfus (Dreyfus 1991:142-144; Dreyfus 1995). Schatzki (already quoted) gives an overview of the issues (Schatzki 2005:237, 240-241).

Olafson appears to have opened the debate by pointing out the tension between the 'plurality' of *Dasein* (in that we all are separate *Daseins*) and its 'singularity' (in that there is apparently only one shared world), and claiming that MH seems to never have worked out a proper solution (Olafson 1987:70-72).

The others -most importantly Dreyfus, the dean of American Heideggerianism- claim that MH's concept of 'das Man' does the trick: the different Daseins, whose being is co-defined by their sociality, **all participate in the same 'das Man', qua shared/public normativity**, and thus all encounter the same world.

Dreyfus' and Schatzki's invocation of the 'publicity' of 'das Man' does take care of the problem of the convergence of the worlds of individual agents, to the extent that:

- (1) we all participate in the same way in das Man;
- (2) das Man is homogeneous and unique.

However, neither condition appears to be fulfilled:

- (1) we definitely do not all participate in das Man in exactly the same way (does HAMMERING have the same function in MH's life and in the cobbler's? and WONDERING ABOUT VORHANDENHEIT? and what about the Sufi mystic and the hunter-gatherer?);
- (2) das Man is inherently fragmented into a large number of separate and heterogeneous activities: REPAIRING SHOES, WRITING AN ARTICLE, DOING THE DISHES, TAKING A WALK ON THE BEACH, BUILDING A CYCLOTRON, CHASING DOWN AN ANTELOPE, FIGHTING A BOXING MATCH, SITTING AROUND STARVING TO DEATH...

But even if (1) we would be all 'the same' in this respect and the source of divergence that Olafson, Schatzki and Dreyfus worry about has been dismissed, this would still not guarantee a smooth convergence into a unique das Man and a correspondingly unique world. As we have seen above, the most pervasive and spectacular types of fragmentation are the result of:

- (2) the **fragmentation** of everyday business **into very divergent practices**, within a single 'culture' or even within a single individual's life: the cobbler perhaps ATTENDS HIS CHURCH, or enjoys a WALK IN THE WOODS, each of which gives rise to a completely different Umwelt, including completely different object-categories and social relations than his business in his shop;
- (3) the **dynamics** inherent in every practice: even within a single obviously 'unitary' practice (say: REPAIRING A CLIENT'S SHOE), the cobbler's intentions, behavior and Umwelt are subject to many changes, according to the sub-actions that make up the practice (compare what is involved in HAMMERING A NAIL, in SHINING THE SHOE, and in RECEIVING THE CLIENT, not only qua objects, but also qua goals and values underlying/accompanying the behavioral patterns).

6.3 The transcendence of the world as a problem

We are thus confronted with an issue concerning the transcendence of the world: why should the highly divergent Umwelten, corresponding to the highly fragmented nature of our actions, converge into a single world?

MH does not seem to make a big problem out of this. Concerning the 'Transzendenzproblem' (S&Z §69, pp. 365-366), he points out (correctly!) that -from the pragmatic point of view developed so far- one cannot legitimately speak of the relation between a subject and an object: if the 'subject' (quotation marks required) coincides with Dasein (partially defined by its internal/structural relation to the world), this dichotomy simply does not make sense. MH is also correct that the question we then should ask is: what ontology can account for the phenomena?¹⁰⁰ However, things go wrong when he starts to answer this question: he simply asserts that -in order to enable Dasein to take care of *zuhandenes*, to thematize *vorhandenes* and to discover Being- the world simply *has to* transcendently be out there (S&Z §69, pp. 365-366), without grounding this assumption in actual phenomenological analysis.

My -admittedly rather bold- conclusion is: MH had all the resources to develop a full-blown pragmatic holistic ontology, in which practice and world are intrinsically intertwined, but at the last minute holds back and tries to fit the radically pragmatic strand in his work in with a classical vision of a unique and unitary transcendental world. The purpose of the next section is then to try and account for MH's unwillingness to follow through on the pragmatic strand of S&Z.

7. Everydayness and inauthenticity

Sections 2 to 5 above have shown that, as long as MH analyzes our (average) everyday practices, his work yields a rather radical but coherent pragmatic account

¹⁰⁰ "Die Welt ist gleichsam schon »weiter draußen«, als es je ein Objekt sein kann. Das »Transzendenzproblem« kann nicht auf die Frage gebracht werden: wie kommt ein Subjekt hinaus zu einem Objekt, wobei die Gesamtheit der Objekte mit der Idee der Welt identifiziert wird. Zu fragen ist: was ermöglicht es ontologisch, daß Seiendes innerweltlich begegnen und als begegnendes objektiviert werden kann? Der Rückgang auf die ekstatisch-horizontal fundierte Transzendenz der Welt gibt die Antwort.

Wenn das »Subjekt« ontologisch als existierendes Dasein begriffen wird, dessen Sein in der Zeitlichkeit gründet, dann muß gesagt werden: Welt ist »subjektiv«. Diese »subjektive« Welt aber ist dann als zeitlich-transzendente »objektiver« als jedes mögliche »Objekt«. (S&Z §69, p. 366)

of agency and objecthood. However, MH is from the outset determined to not stay within this realm.

Thus, we have seen that the distinction between the everyday and the non-everyday plays a crucial role in *S&Z*:

1. the distinction between *Vorhandenheit* and *Zuhandenheit* depends on it (section 4), which has consequences for:
2. the status of science and the status of the objective 'physical' world qua *Umwelt* of 'physical science' as a kind of practice;
3. the very transcendence of the world-out-there.¹⁰¹

However, we have also seen that this difference is not rooted in actual analysis of the everyday. The question that we now have to ask is: what is then the function of the dichotomy '(average) everyday vs. non-everyday'? Our analysis in section 5 suggests a strong link with the notion of 'authenticity'. MH clearly distinguishes everyday practice and our absorption in the various roles we need to take up in it from whatever he wants to construe as an 'authentic' existence, in which our actions are 'for the sake of our Selves' (with a capitalized self, so to speak) *in an attempt to 'ontologize' his critique of inauthenticity*. The skewed pattern of analogies underlying this endeavor can be summarized as follows:

everydayness (inauthenticity) = fragmentation of the world(s) = fragmentation of the Self
authenticity (non-everydayness) = uniqueness and unity of the world = unity of the Self¹⁰²

However, it is hard to see how the same concept can legitimately serve at generating two so different distinctions: (1) science, theory, contemplation vs. everyday practice; and (2) existential authenticity vs. inauthenticity. Mind you: the feeling of alienation, of having lost the unity of one's self, of being scattered by the fragmentation of one's daily life, etc. -especially if it has become endemic in the culture one is part of-, is of course worth philosophical attention. But it is one thing to deplore inauthenticity in that sense, and it's another to equate this inauthenticity with the very essence of

¹⁰¹ The priority given to that view of the world is the exact correlate of the prestige of the practices that generate it, including -I suppose- MH's own ontology.

¹⁰² For the link between (1) the fragmentation of the everyday and (2) the need for authenticity and the non-everyday in *S&Z*, compare: "Regarding wholeness, in §45, Heidegger claims that the interpretation of *Dasein* in Division I cannot be originary because it does not thematize existence as a whole. He proposes to remedy this shortcoming with the analysis of authentic *Dasein*." (Käufel 2013:342)

everydayness and with the ‘mimesis’ that allows us to be ‘someone’ in the first place.¹⁰³ As a phenomenologist, MH should have *analyzed*:

- *how exactly and to what extent* the fragmented everyday does or does not converge into an encompassing world;
- *if and how* science differs from and/or is similar to other activities;
- *how exactly* the lack of existential authenticity he detected in contemporary society is related to structural aspects of our practices.

8. Conclusions

It is now time to link the various lines of thought that we developed in this chapter back to the overall research questions that are its *raison d’être*: what can MH’s account of our everyday business teach us with respect to the ontological issues involved in the contemporary practice turn in (among other fields) Philosophy of Science and Philosophy of Mathematics?

The practice turn and Heidegger’s structural, holistic and radically pragmatic account of objecthood and agency

MH introduces a far more radical version of the practice turn than is currently fashionable: he actually *defines* our (everyday) being in terms of our practices (‘*besorgen*’), which yields a coherently pragmatic account of:

- objecthood (‘*Zuhandenheit*’) and world (‘*Umwelt*’), as defined by relevance (‘*Bedeutsamkeit*’);
- agency and sociality, in terms of ‘*das Man*’ (in the ‘positive’ sense of the term, i.e. *qua* fundamental mimesis and normativity).

Phenomenological critique: heterogeneity, variation and dynamics

I have argued that MH’s analysis did not conform to the standards of the phenomenological method he claimed to follow:

¹⁰³ There are also important **ethical and political corollaries** to this analysis: the very idea of equating ‘everyday life’ (whatever that may be, but the connotation with prototypical ‘household activities’ suffices here) with an inauthentic life creates an unparalleled level of alienation, and can easily give rise to ethically and politically irresponsible developments. Thus, the lines of thought that I develop in the present study may contribute to the issues surrounding the links between MH’s philosophy and his political commitments (cf. e.g. Sheehan 1988; Olafson 2000; Thomson 2005; Heffernan 2016). I *will* go into that subject matter on another occasion.

- contrary to his own methodological injunction, he almost immediately ‘jumps’ to a birds-eye view and pays very little attention to the heterogeneity of both everyday and non-everyday practices and therefore overestimates the differences between the everyday and the non-everyday, and underestimates the heterogeneity of practices and their corresponding Umwelten;
- true to his structural conception of the relation between practice and Umwelt, he therefore overestimates the unity of the world and simply sidesteps the serious issues with the transcendence of the world, and the ensuing problem of relativism that the pragmatic strands in his account inevitably would give rise to;
- he gives no account of the dynamics of practice, which -again- reinforces his homogeneous picture of Zuhandenheit as inconspicuous, and thus also the neat distinction with Vorhandenheit.¹⁰⁴

‘Zuhandenheit vs. Vorhandenheit’ and ‘Theory vs. Praxis’

In the light of the above, we come to the conclusion that MH seems to shrink back from the revolutionary potential of his own argument: after formulating his concept of Zuhandenheit and thus clearing the ground for a radically pragmatic ontology (and in the same breath a radically pragmatic Philosophy of Science), he doesn’t pursue this idea, but appears to feel obliged to still provide for an island of ‘Vorhandenheit’ (and in the same breath a special status for Science and Philosophy). Mind you: MH’s lines of thought are coherent (Vorhandenheit does indeed not come under Zuhandenheit, if theory and contemplation do not count as everyday activities), but his choice to construe theory and contemplation as opposed to everydayness begs the question. The problem is not with the logic of his argument, but with his choice of premises:

- how are scientific / theoretical / philosophical practices non-everyday?
- how are contemplation or ‘just looking around’ not (part of) everyday practices?
- how is it possible to demarcate everydayness as a homogeneous domain from non-everydayness (whatever that may be)?

¹⁰⁴ A potential objection to my criticism as to MH’s lack of attention to the details (the quasi-empirical facts) of everyday business may be: “But MH is a philosopher, not a social scientist of some kind: (quasi-)empirical facts are not his business!” This may be a valid point, but only in the way a cosmologist does not need to do the astrophysical research himself. However, the cosmologist cannot simply ignore the astrophysical facts... After all, MH claims to be a phenomenologist, which should imply that he pays attention to the phenomena; he also claims to start from the phenomena of our everyday business, so he should not ignore these very phenomena.

Everydayness and authenticity

The answer to these questions is obviously linked to the fact that the distinction '(average) everydayness vs. non-everydayness' plays a crucial role in MH's encompassing agenda: this distinction (and the ones related to it) are not the result of an actual phenomenological analysis of (everyday or non-everyday) practices; on the contrary: the notion of average everydayness (and its opposites) is dictated by its importance for MH's ideology of 'authenticity' and is as such projected on -what is presented as- a phenomenology of our 'everyday business'.

The transcendence of the world as a problem vs. the problem of relativity

Pursuing the pragmatic strands in *S&Z* would unavoidably lead to relativism at the deepest ontological level: to every practice corresponds a separate world; it remains to be seen if these *Umwelten* ultimately converge in a unique and coherent world. If one finds this kind of relativism unacceptable (for whatever reason), one will be forced to introduce the transcendence and uniqueness of the world in another way. In any case: transcendence becomes an issue rather than a given. MH is obviously aware of these tensions and walks the thin line between subtlety and conceptual contortions.

Final remarks (assessment)

MH's work also shows in a very explicit way a few of the potential pitfalls for a radically pragmatic approach. For instance, the problems generated by MH's use of the conceptual opposition of 'everyday' and 'theory' should not be repeated and should remind us that a 'symmetrical' (comparative) approach is necessary, also - and perhaps especially- with respect to the sciences. Scientific practices should be studied as 'everyday' practices and compared with other practices, so as to keep the phenomenology transparent and clean.

Still, the conclusion is not that MH's work is somehow deficient as compared to present-day approaches, and our criticism of MH's biases and the detection of tensions within his thought should not lead us to underestimate the depth of MH's understanding.

On the contrary, MH is remarkably lucid and explicit about the deep(?) or wide-ranging problems that only now start to become significant. In any case, he went a

remarkably long way in analyzing what is at stake in the issues surrounding the 21st century practices turn.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ Thus, one of the most impressive parts of MH's work is the way in which he theorizes the structural intertwining of ourselves qua agents and our Umwelt within our practices. As Susan Hurley (Hurley 1998:221–244) pointed out in connection to a potential objection to Wittgenstein's talk of Language Games and Forms of Life (cf. chapter 1, section 5.2), all accounts of the relation between agent and world (or any other avatar of the inside-outside distinction) have to try and steer clear of the two opposite pitfalls of reducing the one to the other. I believe it can be shown that MH sometimes lapses into **the myth of the given** (cf. section 5.5(2) above). Still, it should be clear that MH provides us with the kind of structural account in which the encompassing structure (of i.c. Dasein) determines the relation and identity of both sides as a primary aspect of the ontology; I argue elsewhere (section 5.3 of chapter 3) that this is an adequate solution to that specific issue.

Chapter 3. Hocus-pocus.

Ordinariness, nonsense and epistemic authenticity in Wittgenstein's later work

The starting point for this chapter is the observation of a few paradoxes in Wittgenstein's 'metaphilosophical' lines of thought (most notably *PhU* §§89-133), ultimately going back to the tension between (1) his (explicitly 'anti-revisionist') claim that philosophy "leaves everything as it is" (*PhU* §124), and (2) the apparently ('revisionist') critical strands in his work.¹⁰⁶ This observation leads to a reflection on (1) the notion of 'sense' as embedding in ordinary/everyday practices, and 'nonsense' as a lack of such embedding, and (2) the link between everydayness and authenticity.

Within the context of this thesis, the main contributions of the present chapter consist in (1) a critique of the concept of everydayness/ordinariness, not unlike the one occasioned by our reading of Heidegger in chapter 2, and (2) a further elaboration of LW's idea of the ultimately non-epistemic nature of meaning/sense.

1. Wittgenstein on philosophy: 3 paradoxes

LW's philosophy -not unlike MH's- can be characterized as -at first sight- rather radically opposed to most of the philosophical tradition, both in its stated aims and its actual methods, as well as in its contents.

1.1 The aims and methods of philosophy

As for **aims**, LW makes a very clear distinction between the aims of (his) philosophy and the aims of scientific endeavors. Philosophy does not consist in constructing true propositional knowledge at all. Philosophical problems are not to be considered as questions one should answer, but rather as an undesirable or even pathological state of confusion, which should disappear completely (*PhU* §133; cf. already *TLP* 6.521). In *PhU*, LW uses a number of different metaphors expressing this basic idea:

¹⁰⁶ I owe this topic to Sigrid Leysen, who first made me aware of this tension, some 20 years ago.

- the philosophical problem as an illness and his philosophical method as a therapy (*PhU* §133;¹⁰⁷ §255: “Die Philosophie behandelt eine Frage; wie eine Krankheit”; cf. also *PhU* §593, where ‘philosophische Krankheite’ are said to be caused by an ‘einseitiges Diät’);¹⁰⁸
- the philosophical problem as a case of ‘being lost or trapped’, and philosophy as ‘pointing the way out.’ Cf. e.g. “Was ist dein Ziel in der Philosophie? – Der Fliege den Ausweg aus dem Fliegenglas zeigen.” (*PhU* §309). Cf. also the philosophical problem as ‘Glatteis’ (*PhU* §107); language as a “labyrinth” (*PhU* §203); the dead end street of doing philosophy (*PhU* §436: “Sackgasse des Philosophierens”), ... ;
- the philosophical problem as a case of enchantment (“Verhexung”) of our minds (*PhU* §109), of ‘superstition’ due to ‘grammatical illusions’ that give rise to ‘philosophical pathos’ (*PhU* §110),¹⁰⁹ of being captured by a picture (*PhU* §115);¹¹⁰
- philosophy itself is sometimes seen as an undesirable obsession: we have to learn to stop philosophizing when we want to (*PhU* §133);¹¹¹ philosophical behavior can easily be confused for madness and should perhaps not be performed in public (*ÜG* §467, quoted in section 2.3 below), etc.

LW’s **methods** are closely related to his therapeutic aims. In a number of passages, LW speaks out more or less clearly against theorizing or even explanation (not even,

¹⁰⁷ Wir wollen nicht das Regelsystem für die Verwendung unserer Worte in unerhörter Weise verfeinern oder vervollständigen. // Denn die Klarheit, die wir anstreben, ist allerdings eine *vollkommene*. Aber das heißt nur, daß die philosophischen Probleme *vollkommen* verschwinden sollen. // Die eigentliche Entdeckung ist die, die mich fähig macht, das Philosophieren abzubrechen, wann ich will. - Die die Philosophie zur Ruhe bringt, so daß sie nicht mehr von Fragen gepeitscht wird, die *sie selbst* in Frage stellen. - Sondern es wird nun an Beispielen eine Methode gezeigt, und die Reihe dieser Beispiele kann man abbrechen. - Es werden Probleme gelöst (Schwierigkeiten beseitigt), nicht *ein* Problem. // Es gibt nicht *eine* Methode der Philosophie, wohl aber gibt es Methoden, gleichsam verschiedene Therapien.

¹⁰⁸ To these we could add the notion of ‘mental cramp’, which occurs in the first paragraph of (and on several other occasions in) the *Blue Book* (1933-1934).

¹⁰⁹ »Die Sprache (oder das Denken) ist etwas Einzigartiges« - das erweist sich als ein Aberglaube (nicht Irrtum!), hervorgerufen selbst durch grammatische Täuschungen. // Und auf diese Täuschungen, auf die Probleme, fällt nun das Pathos zurück. (Cf. section 4.3 below).

¹¹⁰ Ein *Bild* hielt uns gefangen. Und heraus konnten wir nicht, denn es lag in unsrer Sprache, und sie schien es uns nur unerbittlich zu wiederholen.

¹¹¹ The issue appears to have been a real-life one for LW. For instance, Rush Rhees reports that LW in conversation confessed: “In my book I say that I am able to leave off with a problem in philosophy when I want to. But that’s a lie; I can’t.” (Wittgenstein and Rhees 2015:54); I am not so sure that Baker and Hacker’s deflationary comment “but this was transforming a metaphor into a literalism” (Baker and Hacker 2005:252) is actually to the point. The concept ‘to stop talking’ / ‘to be silent’ is mentioned elsewhere as well (e.g. *BPP2* §402, and of course *TLP* §7).

or perhaps even especially not, scientific explanation) as a proper and adequate method of philosophy. LW's philosophy consists entirely in clearing up misunderstandings (or so he claims): time and time again, LW wants to show that this or that 'philosophical' proposition is based on an erroneous understanding of the meaning of the words used in that utterance (cf. e.g. *PhU* §§90-92).¹¹² In other words: philosophical problems originate when words are taken out of the everyday contexts in which they belong; putting these words back into their contexts is sufficient to 'dissolve' the problem; philosophical analysis consists in merely presenting the everyday use of certain words in an easily overseable way (cf. e.g. *PhU* §122). Thus, the method consists in 'staying at the surface' (*PhU* §92) and avoiding to yield to the temptation of looking for 'depth' where there is no depth.¹¹³

1.2 Paradox 1: philosophy as therapy vs. philosophy as illness

Some of the above appears contradictory:

- on the one hand, philosophy is supposed to offer a solution to various conceptual problems that we may struggle with;
- on the other hand, LW seems to suggest that philosophical problems are just that: problems *with* (or even: *due to*) philosophy; the tendency to philosophize *is* the problem.

We have already seen that the therapeutic effect is not supposed to be due to any theoretical clarification. This immediately leads to a number of questions as to the status of LW's own discourse. If what LW has to say is not a theory, what is it then? The 'resolute reading' of *TLP*, as initiated by Cora Diamond, James Conant and others,¹¹⁴ offers a radical and in many ways attractive answer: we have to 'resolutely' take LW at his word and read it strictly for its therapeutic effects and consider its

¹¹² Already in *TLP* (6.53) it was stated that the only method in philosophy consisted in pointing out that no meaning had been attributed to certain words in a 'metaphysical' claim.

¹¹³ Cf. Baker and Hacker's formula "The flatness of philosophical grammar" (Baker and Hacker 2009:19-21). Cf. also *ÜG* §471: "Es ist so schwer, den *Anfang* zu finden. Oder besser: schwer, am *Anfang* anzufangen. Und nicht zu versuchen, weiter zurückzugehen", and *BPP1* §509: "Das psychologische Phänomen *nicht* erklären, sondern *hinnehmen*, ist das schwere".

¹¹⁴ For an overview of the debates generated by this approach, see Bronzo 2012, Conant and Bronzo 2017, and the various contributions to the volume *The New Wittgenstein* (Crary and Read 2000).

'quasi-propositional' contents (if that is the word) as strictly nonsense.¹¹⁵ This should suffice to -supposedly- cure our obsessive tendencies towards philosophy.

1.3 Paradox 2: how is Wittgenstein's own endeavor still 'philosophy'?

LW himself -as well as his exegetes- highlights often enough the difference between his own endeavor and the philosophical tradition. This simple fact gives rise to the following paradox:

- on the one hand, LW appears to consider philosophy (or even the theoretical reflex) in general as the cause of all problems, and he tries to 'solve' these problems by dismantling the theoretical attitude as such (see Paradox 1, here above);¹¹⁶
- on the other hand, he still calls what he does 'philosophy', just as he calls Plato's and Augustine's work 'philosophy'.

Moore's notes on some of LW's lectures of the 1930s testify to the fact that LW was already aware of this issue, and offered a (partial) answer to it:

In answer to the question why this "new subject" should be called "philosophy" he said [...] that though what he was doing was certainly different from what, e.g. Plato or Berkeley had done, yet people might feel that it "takes the place of" what they had done - might be inclined to say "This is what I really wanted" and to identify it with what they had done, though it is really different, just as [...] a person who had been trying to trisect an angle by rule and compasses might, when shown the proof- that this is impossible, be inclined to say that this impossible thing was the very thing he had been trying to do, though what he had been trying to do was really different. But [...] he had also said that the "new subject" did really resemble what had been traditionally called "philosophy" in the three respects that (1) it was very general, (2) it was fundamental both to ordinary life and to the sciences, and (3) it was

¹¹⁵ However interesting and fruitful, this reading gives rise to the objection that it does not account for the fact that LW later seems to have felt the need to criticize his earlier conceptions, which under the resolutely therapeutic reading would not make sense: why would it matter to LW to correct contents that are 'nonsense' anyway (to replace it with other nonsense)? However, it may be important for LW's therapeutic discourse to function that it appears uncontroversial and insightful, cf. LW's introduction to the *TLP*:

Dagegen scheint mir die Wahrheit der hier mitgeteilten Gedanken unantastbar und definitiv. Ich bin also der Meinung, die Probleme im Wesentlichen endgültig gelöst zu haben. Und wenn ich mich hierin nicht irre, so besteht nun der Wert dieser Arbeit zweitens darin, daß sie zeigt, wie wenig damit getan ist, daß diese Probleme gelöst sind.

In the *TLP*, LW may have meant to write nothing but trivial, uncontroversial, obviously correct theses, about which he could then at the end claim that they are actually nonsense; later on he may have realized that some of them were not 'obviously correct' after all, which prompted a correction. For a similar argument, see Pichler 2013:443.

¹¹⁶ LW has more than once been accused of promoting 'anti-philosophy' (e.g. Maddy 1993; Sass 2001; Badiou 2011; Jacqueline 2014).

independent of any special results of science; that therefore the application to it of the word "philosophy" was not purely arbitrary."
(Moore 1955:25)

This leads us to a more general question concerning the status of LW's work in terms of his own analysis. What happens if we apply LW's favorite analytical tools to the contents of his own work? How do LW's elucidations compare with and how are they related to our other practices / Language Games? And how exactly is their propositional (?) content ultimately embedded in our Form of Life? Of course, from a strictly Wittgensteinian-therapeutic point of view, this may not be a legitimate line of inquiry: if what LW says is entirely subordinated to its therapeutic aims, it simply may not have any other status at all.¹¹⁷

1.4 Paradox 3: "leaving everything as it is" vs. "a critique of language"

LW claims that his philosophy does not aim at criticizing language games and changing what people say ('non-revisionism', or 'anti-revisionism'); "philosophy leaves everything as it is" (*PhU* §124):

PhU §124

Die Philosophie darf den tatsächlichen Gebrauch der Sprache in keiner Weise antasten, sie kann ihn am Ende also nur beschreiben.

Denn sie kann ihn auch nicht begründen.

Sie läßt alles, wie es ist.

[...]

At the same time, LW is often interpreted in such a way that he apparently does criticize certain ways of speaking, most notably certain typically philosophical uses of language (see, for instance, *PhU* §116, where LW appears to be critical of philosophical/metaphysical language):

PhU §116

Wenn die Philosophen ein Wort gebrauchen - 'Wissen', 'Sein', 'Gegenstand', 'Ich', 'Satz', 'Name' - und das Wesen des Dings zu erfassen trachten, muss man sich immer fragen: Wird denn dieses Wort in der Sprache, in der es seine Heimat hat, je tatsächlich so gebraucht? -

Wir führen die Wörter von ihrer metaphysischen, wieder auf ihre alltägliche Verwendung zurück.

¹¹⁷ However, see the previous footnote and Pichler's article quoted in it.

A critical strand was present in LW's philosophy from the beginning (e.g. *TLP* §6.53), and LW sometimes resorted to very strong language when criticizing certain types of language use (see section 4.3 below).

Both strands in LW's thought taken together immediately give rise to a paradox: if it is true that it is Wittgenstein's aim in philosophy to 'leave everything as it is' and merely describe existing language games as they are, why doesn't he seem to 'leave alone' a number of 'non-ordinary' ('philosophical' / 'metaphysical' / 'theoretical' ...) ways of using language? In other words: why does LW claim to want to 'leave language games as they are' and at the same time condemn a number of types of language use?

Thus, there seems to be an internal tension between two aspects of LW's metaphilosophical thoughts: (1) on the one hand, an explicit aim to only describe language as it occurs within actual language games, embedded in actual practices and ultimately within 'our lives'; and (2) on the other hand, the idea that some types of (what can only be seen as) language use should be distinguished from (and perhaps also replaced by) so-called 'everyday uses'.¹¹⁸

This specific reflection about LW's metaphilosophy leads to more general ones: what is special about philosophical/theoretical/... Language Games? what differentiates 'everyday/ordinary' language and practice from whatever is the opposite of 'everyday/ordinary'?

2. Sense and nonsense

At the beginning of an article about LW's philosophy of mathematics, Victor Rodych states that meaningfulness is "the single most important issue in Wittgenstein's philosophy as a whole" (Rodych 1997:195), and I believe he is right: the opposition sense vs. nonsense is a pervasive one throughout LW's works, and in the below I will

¹¹⁸ I have found remarkably little mention of this paradox in the literature. Still, Klagge gives the following formulation in his review of Bloor's *Wittgenstein, Rules and Institutions* (Bloor 1997): "Instead of seeing philosophical statements as illegitimate extensions of ordinary language, why not see them as a separate set of statements having their own momentum?" (Klagge 2000:556). As it is hard to not interpret LW as a revisionist when it comes to his harsh words concerning certain kinds of math-related discourse, a few commentators on LW's work in Philosophy of Mathematics have remarked on the 'revisionism vs. anti-revisionism' issue (cf. e.g. Rodych 1997:212-214 and Maddy 1993:55). See also Read 2010, quoted in section 3 below.

show how it is connected with the (ethical/aesthetical/existential) biases that underlie and motivate LW's philosophy as a whole.¹¹⁹

2.1 Nonsense and senselessness in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*

In the *TLP*, 'nonsense' appears to be used almost as a technical term, at least according to some (standard/mainstream) interpretations.¹²⁰ Thus, for a proposition to be meaningful, it has to be 'bivalent', i.e. either true or false; otherwise, it is not a real proposition at all. Tautologies and contradictions do not refer to the world and are not strictly 'neither true nor false', but rather 'always true' resp. 'always false'. In some sense, tautologies have therefore no sense either. The *TLP* does not use the term 'unsinnig' (nonsensical) for this case, but 'sinnlos' (senseless).¹²¹ This aligns well with the so-called 'picture theory' of truth (and also meaning) adopted in the *TLP*: propositions mean something by being a picture of reality (for a recent overview of this aspect of LW's early work, see Johnston 2017). The following formula summarizes this conception:

- meaningful = bivalent (true or false) = refers to reality;
- meaningless = not bivalent (always true, never true, neither true nor false) = does not refer to reality.¹²²

This aspect of LW's thinking in the *TLP*, led some exegetes to attribute to LW a distinction between two types of nonsense:

- (1) pure **gibberish**, which does not even look or sound like normal language ("tweedly deedly"); and
- (2) **pseudo-propositions**, which look or sound like propositions, but actually do not function like proper propositions (tautologies and contradictions belong here, if they are not considered a separate class all together).

¹¹⁹ Cf. also the following remark by Juliet Floyd, another specialist of LW's Philosophy of Mathematics: "The crucial point for Wittgenstein—crucial to all his philosophy—is that no symbolism, no words, are intrinsically self-applicable or meaningful." (Floyd 2001:300). However, there is also a lot to be said for the view held by Paul Horwich: "I have been arguing that, early and late, it is Wittgenstein's view of philosophy, rather than his view of meaning, that plays the pivotal role in his thought" (Horwich 2004:105). Nothing hinges on it for the present purposes.

¹²⁰ For overviews of the debates, see Bronzo 2012; Conant and Bronzo 2017; Cheung 2017.

¹²¹ *TLP* 4.461; *TLP* 4.4611; *TLP* 4.462.

¹²² NB that the notion of 'bivalent' (i.e. 'true or false') in this context applies (or does not apply) to the single sentence. Jean Paul Van Bendegem (personal communication, May 2017) points out that this is a slightly different use of the term 'bivalent' as compared to the notion of 'bivalent logic'.

Some exegetes also distinguish between (A) useful nonsense and (B) useless nonsense. Most notably, this distinction is superimposed on the distinction 'saying vs. showing'. This distinction is then used to force a way out of the interpretative impasse caused by LW's adamant statement that what he had to say in the *TLP* was nonsense as well and should be discarded after it had been used by the reader (cf. the metaphor of the ladder in *TLP* 6.54). The idea of a kind of nonsense that somehow conveys 'ineffable' contents (by showing them) then allows the interpreter to mitigate the harshness of LW's instruction to throw the whole *TLP* away and maintain that the nonsense that makes up the bulk of *TLP* is still somehow significant; this idea is the main target of the criticism of the advocates of the resolute reading of the *TLP* (Cheung 2017).

Whatever one may think of any of these interpretations, (1) gibberish is not a philosophical problem to LW (or anybody else, really) and was -accordingly- not discussed by him in *TLP*, so his account de facto only concerns (2) 'pseudo-language', i.e. language that appears to refer to the world but actually doesn't.¹²³ For the present purposes, the main point about LW's talk about nonsense is that it concerns 'fake' utterances that *appear* to be propositions but in fact *are not*. This notion of 'fakeness' will become important below.

2.2 Sense as embedding/ Nonsense as lack of embedding

After his return to philosophy in the late 1920s, LW's vision of what language is and does had considerably expanded: he no longer focused only on truth and propositionality, but recognized a large array of types of language uses.

The language-critical strand in his thought persisted, though, but in a different guise: whether an utterance makes sense or not now depends on whether or not it has a proper function within an (everyday) context, and words and sentences can have a wide array of possible functions (cf. e.g. the metaphor of the toolbox or the cabin of a locomotive in *PhU* §§11-12, and the explicit discussion of the issue in §23). This is what LW's use of the concept 'use' ("Gebrauch") comes down to.

LW's mature formulation of this idea typically involved the notion of **Language Game**: a pattern in which linguistic and non-linguistic behavior, agent intentions and representations, and objects form a structural whole. These usually small-scale

¹²³ Still, I believe it would be correct to say that, if pressed, LW (at least at the time of *TLP*) would not have admitted that (2) was any better than (1) and that- in fact- logically speaking, there is only one type of nonsense, thus agreeing with the 'resolute readings'.

patterns are in turn part of more encompassing, holistic notions such as -famously but very infrequently- **Form of Life**, and similar holistic notions such as 'our lives'. Building on most notably Baker and Hacker's notion of 'internal relation' (Baker and Hacker 2009:75 and elsewhere), I have argued in chapter 1, section 5.3 that the relations between the various variables within Language Games / Forms of Life should be understood as 'internal' / 'structural' relations, i.e. that they should not be viewed as relations between pre-existing entities, but as relations that define the very identity of these entities. In this vein, we can formulate the notion of 'sense' in the following **holistic and structuralistic** way:

sense = function within a context = **embedding** within a Language Game
(and ultimately in a Form of Life (or: 'our lives'))

Throughout his later work, LW illustrates what he means with numerous examples of how language functions within encompassing activities, such as building houses, buying apples, selling wood, etc.

A corresponding implementation of 'nonsense'/'senselessness'¹²⁴ immediately follows:

nonsense = lack of function within a context = **lack of embedding** in a
Language Game / Form of Life

This reading of the concept of nonsense is corroborated by a number of formulations in LW's later work: "language on holiday" (*PhU* §38), "a wheel that is not part of the engine" (*PhU* §271), an engine "idling" (*PhU* §132: "wenn die Sprache leerläuft"),¹²⁵ a sham corbel that supports nothing (*PhU* §217: "Unsere Forderung ist eine architektonische; die Erklärung eine Art Scheingesims, das nichts trägt"), a sham knob that turns out to be a mere ornament not connected with the mechanism (*PhU* §270).¹²⁶

¹²⁴ From here onwards I will simply use the word nonsense as the umbrella term, covering all forms of defective language use, and no longer bother with the *TLP* distinction 'senseless' vs. 'nonsense'.

¹²⁵ Cf. Guetti 1993.

¹²⁶ One of the more interesting applications of this conception is on mathematics: LW claims that for mathematical discourse to have sense, it must be embedded in practices and ultimately in our Forms of Life. This embedding includes the everyday practices of counting, measuring, etc., but also various other applications. Eighty years later, a more prudent version of this idea apparently can still be presented as new (Ferreirós 2015).

Meaning as semantics vs. meaning as pragmatics

At this point it may be useful to point out that LW's approach to meaning (or 'sense') constitutes a radical departure from the semantic approaches of both the logicist tradition (exemplified by e.g. Frege) and the semantics of natural language as a sub-domain of linguistics. Whatever their differences, all these approaches view meaning as a matter of relations between different levels of structure (whether these structures are viewed as mental representations or not is not important here). In this sense, semantics is just more syntax.

What we call 'sense' in a Wittgensteinian vein, is not that. However one wishes to construe the exact function of semantics in the traditional sense of correspondence between levels of structure, LW insists that such semantics does not suffice as an account of meaning, and sense ultimately depends on how utterances function as actions and on how these actions are embedded within our practices. Following usage in linguistics, we can call the approach that emphasizes this aspect '**pragmatics**'.¹²⁷

2.3 Embedding in what? Or: sitting in the garden with a philosopher

If to have sense for an utterance is a matter of being embedded in an encompassing Language Game (and ultimately our lives), the question arises as to how non-embedded language use could ever arise: sensible behavior is always motivated by the pragmatic context in which it is embedded, otherwise it would simply not occur (what would occasion behavior, if not its function within a situation in which it is embedded?). The only alternative would be completely random behavior, as if, for instance, caused by -say- an epileptic crisis, but that kind of behavior would not normally be considered intentional/sensible/meaningful, anyway, and would hence not be a case in point, in that it would be explained in terms of causes and not in terms of meaning/sense. The following excerpt illustrates this very nicely:

ÜG §467-469

467. Ich sitze mit einem Philosophen im Garten; er sagt zu wiederholten Malen »Ich weiß, daß das ein Baum ist«, wobei er auf einen Baum in unsrer Nähe zeigt. Ein Dritter kommt daher und hört das, und ich sage ihm: »Dieser Mensch ist nicht verrückt: Wir philosophieren nur.«

¹²⁷ This notion of pragmatics subsumes Van Bendegem's notion of 'the rhetoric of mathematics' (Van Bendegem 2008). The subject matter of natural language rhetoric has been taken up in the more neutral (less applied) and (partly for that reason) wider field of linguistic pragmatics (Mey 2001).

468. Jemand sagt irrelevant »Das ist ein Baum«. Er könnte den Satz sagen, weil er sich erinnert, ihn in einer ähnlichen Situation gehört zu haben; oder er wurde plötzlich von der Schönheit dieses Baumes getroffen, und der Satz war ein Ausruf; oder er sagte sich den Satz als grammatisches Beispiel vor. (Etc.) Ich frage ihn nun: »Wie hast du das gemeint?«, und er antwortet: »Es war eine Mitteilung, an dich gerichtet.« Stünde mir da nicht frei, anzunehmen, er wisse nicht, was er sage, wenn er verrückt genug ist, mir diese Mitteilung machen zu wollen?

469. Jemand sagt im Gespräch zu mir zusammenhangslos »Ich wünsch dir alles Gute«. Ich bin erstaunt; aber später sehe ich ein, daß diese Worte in einem Zusammenhang mit seinen Gedanken über mich stehen. Und nun erscheinen sie mir nicht mehr sinnlos.

Even the most 'nonsensical' metaphysics occurs in a context that motivates its very occurrence. It cannot be denied that actual metaphysical language games have all the attributes that language games are supposed to have: they are in part historically and culturally contingent, of course, just like any other practice, but each of them is also strongly interconnected with a whole system of similar language games, that are in turn connected in a more or less stable way to -for instance- scientific language games and practices, etc. So, embedded they are.

Thus, the problem is not so much 'embedding or no embedding?,' but rather: 'how much embedding is enough?',¹²⁸ or: 'what counts as proper embedding?'. LW appears to have a simple answer to this question: only embedding in everyday/ordinary/normal contexts counts.¹²⁹

3. Ordinary/everyday/normal vs. what?

We have seen that the distinction between sense and nonsense becomes void (without application) if we can't answer the question 'what are proper contexts for

¹²⁸ One might want to try out a concept like '**depth of embedding**'. The relevance of certain types of language use might then be construed locally, within the LG in which they occur (otherwise they would not occur at all), but are only very loosely connected to the encompassing context of our lives in general. Similarly, the idea that some activities are embedded 'deeper' in our lives in that they have -for instance- to do with food, a very primary need on all accounts, may have some appeal. I have tried to pursue this line of thought, but in the end it went nowhere. For the fact that pragmatic analyses beyond the level of the 'mesoscopic' practice (cf. what LW calls a Language Game) are highly problematic, cf. my discussion of the problem of the unity/uniqueness of the world in connection with Heidegger's account of everyday practice in section 6 of chapter 2.

¹²⁹ These issues remind us the criticism Derrida directed at Austin -and, after Searle attacked him rather viciously, also at Searle- regarding the distinctions 'normal vs. abnormal' / 'serious vs. non-serious' etc. (Derrida 1990). Derrida was right, and Searle -as in several other such matters- wrong.

utterances to be embedded in and what are not?'. The obvious answer is that LW distinguished between 'normal' / 'ordinary' / 'everyday' ('normal' / 'gewöhnlich' / 'alltäglich') contexts and whatever their opposite may be.¹³⁰

Our main question thus has become: what counts as ordinary and what counts as not ordinary? And according to what criteria do we distinguish between the two?

3.1 Philosophy is not ordinary / Philosophy = the non-ordinary

LW claimed that he would "bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use" (*PhU* §116) and also demonstrates this throughout his later work by pointing out how words are used in the context of prototypical everyday activities.¹³¹ This formulation yields the impression that there are two separate domains: the everyday and the non-everyday.

It is easy to imagine what kind of practices we would consider *prototypically everyday*, and LW's text helps us by giving numerous examples (for starters there is the list of Language Games in *PhU* §23, but examples abound throughout the rest of his later work): building a house, buying apples, learning to count, selling wood, ... However, as is pointed out by Gordon Baker (Baker 2002, see also Read 2010), LW's use of the terms 'ordinary' and 'everyday' is skewed, in that it is always contrasted with 'philosophical' or 'metaphysical' usage. In his article 'Everyday/ordinary language', Rupert Read agrees and calls the misidentification of the proper contrast-class to everydayness "the crucial mistake in 'Wittgenstein studies'" (Read 2010:63) and claims that most of the Wittgensteinian tradition has been wrong in believing that LW actually ruled out certain types of language use on the basis of his views on sense. Both Baker (2002) and Read (2010) push the idea that the contrast class for the everyday in LW is the metaphysical, to its limit: according to them **the non-ordinary equals philosophy**, or: the ordinary is whatever is not metaphysical, which makes paradox 1 above even more of a paradox.

Baker and Read are right about both the existence and the cause of pervasive misunderstandings concerning the revisionist strand in LW's work, but the everyday

¹³⁰ The importance of this concept and its counterdistinction from the 'higher', the 'abstract', the 'sublime', etc. within LW's philosophy is rooted in the anti-rationalist, anti-positivist and generally anti-theoretical tendencies in the various brands of 'Lebensphilosophie' (see e.g. Schatzki (1991:326–327), who specifically refers to Spengler as the "concrete link" between Lebensphilosophie and LW) adopted by such philosophers as Arthur Schopenhauer (for the relations between LW and Schopenhauer, see e.g. Jacquette 2017), Søren Kierkegaard, and Friedrich Nietzsche, a background also shared (and processed in his own distinctive way) by LW's contemporary Heidegger.

¹³¹ A good example is his account of talk of consciousness and brain-processes in various contexts in *PhU* §412.

as a concept has -at first sight- more substance to it than they seem to imply, due to its association with a range of prototypical practices, as exemplified throughout LW's work.¹³²

3.2 What makes 'the metaphysical' different from 'the everyday'?

In any case, LW considered 'philosophy' -both his own approach and the approaches he tries to 'dissolve'- an activity that is somehow 'special', i.e. somehow *fundamentally* different and separate from what he considers 'ordinary' Language Games.¹³³ This conclusion in its turn leads to the question as to what constitutes that difference and separation.

On the one hand, there is the question as to the limits of ordinary language: what is the criterion for distinguishing between an 'ordinary' Language Game and other practices? Wittgenstein cannot have meant that 'ordinary language' is a single and specific type of practice, especially not as the inventor of the 'language game' language game. This would be in manifest contradiction with the inherent and irreducible variation between Language Games that is highlighted throughout LW's own later work (see chapter 1 section 4.7 and 5.4 above). Note that he often uses quite exotic-looking examples in his thought experiments. Fundamental differences between Language Games should be 'ordinary' to him.

On the other hand, we should take a closer look at the pragmatic features of DOING PHILOSOPHY, both as conceived of by LW and in the rest of our philosophical tradition. What makes metaphysical language not ordinary? Why is the language of building houses ordinary, and -say- Heidegger's language not ordinary?¹³⁴ What if

¹³² Before moving on, it may be useful to point out that -contrary to what one might expect, and contrary to e.g. MH's conception-, for LW, **science** appears to be part and parcel of the everyday, plausibly because of its ultimate embedding in experiment and its applications in engineering. Similarly, **mathematics** qua ordinary mathematical practices such as calculus or proof or geometrical construction are considered 'ordinary'/'sensible' (these practices are -again- relatively straightforwardly embedded in obviously everyday practices such as counting, measuring, etc.), but LW's has a serious problem with philosophical accounts of some of these practices; this matter deserves a separate and thorough treatment that cannot be included in this thesis.

¹³³ This is -of course- a straightforward inheritance of the philosophical tradition, which considered philosophy as something 'sublime'. Note that the early LW appears to have fully bought into this vision: his rejection of the 'crystalline purity' of logic in *PhU* §97 and §§107-108 is explicitly directed at his own previous work.

¹³⁴ Let it be clear, though, that LW nowhere criticizes Heidegger in his writings, nor in what is known of his conversation. There is one case of anecdotal evidence of LW commenting on Heidegger, but not in a particularly critical way: "Ich kann mir wohl denken, was Heidegger mit Sein und Angst meint." (Murray 1974). Note that his remark occurred during a conversation with members of the Wiener Kreis, and may have been deliberately provocative on the part of LW.

DOING METAPHYSICS is part of *my life*? Why should metaphysics be considered as 'abnormal'? Isn't it a Lebensform like any other?

3.3 Why isn't everything ordinary? Or: how much embedding is enough?

Let's go back to the notion 'sense = embedding in everyday life'. The problem was: how can LW distinguish the everyday from the non-everyday and what are the criteria for distinguishing between the two? Isn't it true that in the end, anything that occurs at all is somehow embedded in someone's life?

This problem becomes even worse if we take into account what Klagge calls LW's 'ghettoization' of certain domains (religion, folk psychology, ...) into their own Language Games (Klagge 2000:556), so as to protect them from critique from the outside. Klagge is right to ask why this could not be done to philosophy. In other words: why should metaphysics not be everyday? Or more generally: if sense is embedding, how can anything ever be nonsense? *Why shouldn't everything be considered equally 'ordinary'?*

Rupert Read explores the idea that "everything is everyday" in his article on 'ordinary/everyday language' as a 'key concept' in Wittgenstein's work (Read 2010):

Why have I given so few 'examples' of ordinary/everyday language in this article? One might risk the following reply: Because, in context, *everything* is ordinary. This is the way we look at things. (And in the spirit of *PI* 122, we should now perhaps ask: Is this a world-view?) Everything that *is* anything. There is no such thing as proprietarily pointing to *the* everyday. To do so would be as absurd as trying to point to one's visual field, or to point out the universe. As I have suggested we say: "The everyday" is itself, ironically, if it is to be useful, perhaps best heard as a 'non-everyday' 'category'. A 'transitional' category. It is *not* some things rather than others...

So wouldn't the better way to proceed after all simply be by giving 'examples' of metaphysical uses of language? But the scare-quotes cannot be dropped: because *there aren't any*. Metaphysics is an aspiration or a failing only. It is *not* an achievement-term.

For Read's Wittgenstein, even proper metaphysics need not be objectionably 'metaphysical': as long as the utterer is able to 'display the meaningfulness of their words' (the expression is from a quote from Witherspoon 2000:344) and take responsibility for them (Read 2010:66). However, the LW we know from his writings and biographical accounts appears to have been far less liberal and by all accounts *did* voice objections to a number of things...

Anyway, Read's account does not solve the problems surrounding LW's (or anybody else's) use of the term 'everyday', it only *confirms* that there are important problems with that concept. I will suggest that it would be better to drop the concept altogether, but let us first try to understand why LW did not drop it, but -on the contrary- built a crucial part of his thinking upon it. Why would anyone choose to operate with such an obviously skewed set of concepts? The answer must be: something 'deep' has to depend on it, something intimately intertwined with LW's philosophical and/or existential agenda or worldview.

4. Nonsense and fakeness: epistemic authenticity

In the above I showed that LW's conception of the sense-nonsense distinction ultimately depends on the dichotomy everyday vs. non-everyday, which however is highly problematic and impossible to apply coherently as a descriptive/analytical tool. My argument suggests that LW must have had good reasons to maintain it, which do not emerge from his analysis, but are part of the worldview/agenda underlying his analysis.

In what follows I will investigate the idea (1) that at the root of LW's pervasive commitment to the notion of 'everydayness'/'ordinariness', there lies an ethical/aesthetical issue, and (2) that this issue can be identified under the heading 'authenticity vs. fake'.¹³⁵ In other words: my claim is that what LW disproved of – both in philosophy and in other contexts- was fakeness/phoniness: a lack of authenticity.¹³⁶ For the sake of clarity, let us define **fakeness** as follows:

*if A looks/sounds/behaves/... like X (pretends to be X/...), but is not X,
then A is a fake X*

¹³⁵ Despite the differences in actual implementation of the concepts of everydayness and authenticity in both authors (even their moral polarity is inversed), this move is exactly parallel to the one I used in my analysis of MH's use of these concepts (chapter 2 section 7).

¹³⁶ In section 2.1 above we already saw that in *TLP* LW's conception of nonsense was mainly concerned with pseudo-language (gibberish is not really a problem). Still, the term 'nonsense' does not *mean* 'inauthenticity', obviously. However, tautologies (for example) may look like they say something about reality, but they actually do not. Thus, what is wrong with 'nonsense' in a technical, tractarian sense has the same shape as what is wrong with fakeness: appearance vs. actual function.

4.1 The problem of authenticity in its historical and cultural context

Issues related to the concept of 'authenticity' are evidently not unique to LW's philosophy. In what follows, I will briefly mention three examples that show how LW's concerns were shared by his contemporaries.

Janik and Toulmin on bogus language games and the last days of Kakania

According to Janik and Toulmin's classic *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (Janik and Toulmin 1973), fakeness (a discrepancy between form and function) –or at least complaining about such a discrepancy- was endemic in the Vienna of the last decades of the Austrian Empire. This is apparent in such intellectuals as Karl Kraus, whose concept of a critique of language influenced LW deeply, obviously in Freud's analysis of neurosis as repression, as well as in the attempts of such aesthetic innovators as architect Adolph Loos and composer Arnold Schönberg to get away from the stilted conventions of the contemporary mainstream and make their arts meaningful and relevant to the issues of the society of which they are a part. Janik and Toulmin also make link with sclerotic social ideology prevalent in the dying Habsburg empire (the *Kaiserliches und Königliches 'Kakania'*):

It was the consistent attempt to evade the social and political problems of Austria by the debasement of language -by the invention of "bogus language games," based on the pretense that the existing forms of life were other than they really were- that created the underlying occasion for men's universal confusions about the problems of expression and communication. This confusion found an outlet, both in the particular aesthetic critiques characteristic of all the different arts in late Habsburg Vienna, and also in the general philosophical critique of language as initiated by Mauthner and subsequently taken up by Wittgenstein himself. (Indeed, the phenomenon of "bogus language games" might even be regarded as a linguistic aspect of the Marxian concept of "false consciousness." In Marxian terms, the results of our inquiries have helped to show just how comprehensively such a "false consciousness" can permeate and distort the operations of any society and its culture.)

(Janik and Toulmin 1973:273-274)

For Janik and Toulmin, the problem of authenticity was *the* problem that the society in which LW grew up was facing, at the cultural and aesthetic level, but also at the social and political level, and even at the existential level of individual thought and verbal expression.¹³⁷

¹³⁷ Throughout Janik and Toulmin 1973, we encounter fakeness-related key words such as hypocrisy, sham, bogus, appearance(s), ..., all of which function in ways that conform to our general formula for fakeness 'looks like X, but isn't X'. The postscript, aptly titled 'The language of alienation', is particularly rich (Janik and Toulmin 1973:263-275).

Paul Ernst on 'organic and unorganic forms of life'

In his article 'Wittgenstein's Later Work in relation to Conservatism' (Nyíri 1982), J.C. Nyíri quotes another interesting historical parallel for the kind of concern with issues of authenticity that we try to attribute to LW: playwright and essayist Paul Ernst, of whom LW read at least one publication, and who -interestingly but perhaps incidentally- also used the notion "form of life". In one of his essays (not the text we know LW read), Ernst used a dichotomy between "organic forms of life" and "unorganic forms of life": 'peasants', as well as 'masters', had an 'organic' form of life, which "imbues the whole man"; the 'unorganic' forms of life are called "bourgeois" by Ernst. About the latter, Nyíri quotes Ernst as follows:

All those forms of life are bourgeois which imbue not the whole man but merely some part of him, and it is within those forms that terms such as profession and status, work and personality, have acquired their contemporary meaning. Here the life of the individual is no longer settled in a natural way, it is no longer simply determined by fixed conditions, like the life of the bees; it must be formed anew at every occasion, and everyone must search for this form himself.

(Paul Ernst, as quoted in Nyíri 1982:52-53)

Heidegger on authenticity and everydayness

Though coming from a somewhat different cultural environment (super-religious lower middle-class from rural Messkirch, not super-rich high society from cosmopolitan Vienna), but like LW influenced by the Lebensphilosophie of Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger also dealt with the issue of authenticity and everydayness. Interestingly, the polarity of the connection between the everyday and authenticity in Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* is reversed as compared with LW's conception: as I have shown in section 7 of chapter 2, Heidegger's everyday vs. non-everyday distinction is as skewed as the one we have observed in LW, and is equally motivated by the underlying concern with authenticity, but MH is concerned with the lack of authenticity in average everyday life, and appears to associate philosophy with our potential for authenticity.¹³⁸

¹³⁸ It is tempting to associate these differences between LW and Heidegger with their respective socio-cultural and political profiles. LW was (in many ways, though not all) a conservative with -for all practical purposes- 19th century values, and MH was -among other things but still crucially- a Nazi. Let's not go there here.

Suffice it here to conclude that talk of authenticity and fakeness (in connection with 'everydayness') was in the air when LW's philosophy took shape. In the next section, we will try and show how this kind of talk was important to LW personally and how it relates to his work in philosophy.

4.2 Ethical and aesthetical biases underlying Wittgenstein's philosophical agenda

LW's philosophy contains a strong **ethical bias**, as well as a deep-rooted **aesthetical bias**, which also shows in his biography.

Ethics

A number of biographical anecdotes suggest that LW had very strong ethical (moralistic?) reflexes throughout his life and was always ready to disapprove of other people's or his own behavior in the strongest possible terms ("nonsense" appears to be one of the more gentle terms),¹³⁹ and his biographers mention his obsession with honesty and sincerity, and his lack of patience with lack of these qualities, with hypocrisy, with half-heartedness, with vanity, etc.¹⁴⁰

LW's biography shows that LW suffered 'existentially' from his logico-philosophical problems, in the very same way other -perhaps more 'normal'-¹⁴¹ people may suffer from problems of a moral order. For LW, philosophical problems are not a fun game to play, but dead serious, as can also be seen in the following oft quoted passage from Bertrand Russell's *Autobiography*:

¹³⁹ A good example is the letter LW wrote to his friend and fellow-ex-POW Ludwig Hänsel in 1937, in which he comments on papers written by the latter, by calling them amongst other things "vomit" (Schulte 2001:183); Schulte makes the following comment: "[...] what arouses Wittgenstein's interest is more the way one thinks or talks about a subject than the content of these thoughts or statements", which fits in nicely with some of the main points of the present chapter.

¹⁴⁰ See e.g. Monk 1990, 44- 45, but similar examples can be found throughout any biographical account.

¹⁴¹ Throughout the best-selling *Wittgenstein's poker* (Edmonds and Eidinow 2001), LW is presented as "not quite human" (thus, at the beginning of chapter 21, interestingly opposed to the "all too human" Popper); cf. also the beginning of chapter 16: "While Popper remains recognizably human despite his aggressive approach to debate and disagreement, there is an unearthly, even alien, quality to Wittgenstein's dealings with others".

He used to come to see me every evening at midnight, and pace up and down my room like a wild beast for three hours in agitated silence. Once I said to him: 'Are you thinking about logic or about your sins?' 'Both', he replied, and continued his pacing. I did not like to suggest that it was time for bed, as it seemed probable both to him and me that on leaving me he would commit suicide.

(Russell 2009:313)

Apart from these anecdotal stories, there is evidence for an **ethical aspect to LW's philosophy** itself. The most explicit indication is perhaps LW's famous letter to Ludwig von Ficker, probably written at the end of October or the beginning of November 1919:

Ich wollte einmal in das Vorwort einen Satz geben, der nun tatsächlich nicht darin steht, den ich Ihnen aber jetzt schreibe, weil er Ihnen vielleicht ein Schlüssel sein wird: Ich wollte nämlich schreiben, mein Werk bestehe aus zwei Teilen: aus dem, der hier vorliegt, und aus alledem, was ich *nicht* geschrieben habe. Und gerade dieser zweite Teil ist der Wichtige. Es wird nämlich das Ethische durch mein Buch gleichsam von Innen her begrenzt; und ich bin überzeugt, daß es, *streng, nur* so zu begrenzen ist. Kurz, ich glaube: Alles das, was *viele* heute *schwefeln*, habe ich in meinem Buch festgelegt, indem ich darüber schweige.

(von Ficker 1988:196–197)

If true (and why shouldn't it be true?), this should be the key (as LW says) to his whole philosophy. The question is then: how exactly does an ethical/aesthetical impetus generate LW's apparently technical work on meaning in a logical or logical-anthropological sense? I believe this issue should be taken seriously, and also as a 'technical' philosophical-analytical matter, not only at the 'meta-level' or as a matter of human interest.¹⁴²

As far as the actual contents of LW's moral interventions go, I am not the only one to point out the central role of **authenticity**.¹⁴³ For an extended account, focusing on the role of such topics as sincerity, authenticity, fatuity, theatricality, vanity and

¹⁴² Anat Biletzki dedicates a full chapter to interpretations that read LW's work as motivated by his ethical vision (Biletzki 2003:95–101), mostly referring to Burton Dreben and pupils. However, a lot of the mainstream literature focusing on LW in connection with ethics does not seriously take into account LW's claim that the whole of his philosophical endeavor is motivated by ethical concerns. For instance the entry 'Wittgenstein on ethics' (Arrington 2017) in the most recent high-profile manual on LW, bizarrely does not even mention the issue as to what LW might have meant when he said that the point of *TLP* is an ethical one.

¹⁴³ Though the concept is strangely (?) absent from the main current Anglo-Saxon manuals *The Oxford Handbook of Wittgenstein* (Kuusela and McGinn 2011) and *A Companion to Wittgenstein* [Blackwell] (Glock and Hyman 2017). See however Cahill 2004.

confession, I refer to Louis Sass' article 'Deep Disquietudes: Reflections on Wittgenstein as Antiphilosopher' (Sass 2001, especially pp. 110-113 and 131-136).

Another crucial point that we should retain from what is known about the ethical aspects of LW's thought is the notion that what is important about the ethical is ultimately non-propositional (cf. *TLP* 6.42 and 6.421 (see below), but also e.g. *PhPF*, xi, §§352-357, in which LW emphasizes both the importance of our intuitive knowledge as to when someone is sincere or not, and the lack of proof in every single case).

Aesthetics

There is an obvious biographical/'existential' side to the importance of aesthetics for LW. Starting with his upbringing in a high-society family committed to sponsoring, entertaining, and savoring the *crème de la crème* of the Austrian art world, LW remained actively interested in aesthetic and artistic matters (music, literature, architecture, sculpture, ...) throughout his life, as is -for instance- witnessed by the selection of notes published as *Vermischte Bemerkungen / Culture and Value (VB)*, but also elsewhere in his oeuvre (for a quick overview of the data, see e.g. Hagberg's uninspired article 'Wittgenstein's Aesthetics' (Hagberg 2014) in the on-line *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*).

However, there are also indications that LW's aesthetical bias ran deeper than his preoccupation with art, and in a way that is relevant to our purposes in the present study. In the notorious sequence of paragraphs following *TLP* §6.4, after having pointed out that ethics is necessarily non-propositional (i.e. ethics can not refer to things that are within the world), LW also says that ethics and aesthetics are one, and transcendental (just like logic, for that matter): "Es ist klar, daß sich die Ethik nicht aussprechen läßt. Die Ethik ist transzendental. (Ethik und Ästhetik sind Eins.)" (*TLP* 6.421). It has also been suggested that LW's approach to life was as much an aesthetical one, as it was ethical:

For him style, the way something was put, was of enormous importance, and that not only in the artistic sphere. He said once, it wouldn't matter what a friend had done but rather how he talked about it. Similarly he used to insist on a careful reading of the dictum, *Le style c'est l'homme même*. One should note the word 'même': the thought is that the real man reveals himself in his style. The meaning of the words, the content, is something secondary, and so likewise is the brute action performed.

(McGuinness 2002:21-22)

We can also take a closer look at exactly what LW's aesthetical judgments in an art-related context amounted to. Eran Guter's excellent contribution "'A Surrogate for the Soul': Wittgenstein and Schoenberg' (Guter 2011) offers a number of interesting insights. First of all, Guter shows how LW links musical understanding to our ability to operate with an intuitive sense of human **physiognomy**, in a way that defies any mechanical conception of rule-following, let alone an epistemic/propositional grounding:

The concept of musical expression, like the concept of "soul", is diametrically opposed to the concept of a mechanism (cf. RPP I §324)—an exact, definite calculation and prediction is conceptually detrimental to what we regard as musical expression. [...]

Considering musical meaning, an internal relation adjoining musical gesture and the life of mankind (shown by language), enables us to appreciate Wittgenstein's assertion: "For me this musical phrase is a gesture. It insinuates itself into my life. I adopt it as my own." (MS 137, 67 – CV, 73) What we nonchalantly call "music" or "a melody" is already given to us with a familiar physiognomy, its impression vertically related to a myriad of other language games in its significantly human environment. And so, says Wittgenstein, "understanding music is an avowal of the life of mankind." (MS 137, 20)

(Guter 2011:124–125)

Next, Guter also insists on the very intricate ways in which LW sees a link between musical **meaning** and the way in which art is embedded in the surrounding culture (cf. also Monk 1990:404–405). Of course, LW objects to art that is not properly embedded because it pretends to be something else than it is,¹⁴⁴ but it is important to note that this embedding does not necessarily boil down to the absence or presence of this or that formal feature. Thus, LW approves in (for instance) Josef Labor's work of the simple tonality that he disapproves of in the occasional simply tonal passages in Mahler's work:

¹⁴⁴ NB: LW objects also to the 'modern' music of composers such as Schönberg that burgeoned in the Vienna that he grew up in (there are many 'external' socio-biographical links between LW and Schönberg, but they do not appear to lead to anything philosophically relevant, except perhaps by contrast (Guter 2011, 109 and passim)). It may be interesting to consider how the formalism of Schönberg's serial approach might have been objectionable to LW in the same way that formalism in mathematics would irk him. Both are signs of the time. And for LW this time was not a good time. For all practical purposes, this may also be interpreted as LW simply displaying his 19th century tastes. NB: LW did not advocate some kind of functionalist aesthetics either: his claim is not that form should only follow function and his objections against ornamentation are not based on functionalist concepts but on the idea that -for instance- a bed should look like a bed, and the very functional idea to put wheels underneath it is rule out for that reason (McGuinness 2002:19–20).

To use Wittgenstein's own words, when writing in simple harmonic progressions, Mahler only appears to bear witness to Beethoven's or Bruckner's ancestral mother; in reality, since its rules of grammar are radically altered, Mahler's music bespeaks different things, involving concepts that are different, and ultimately, if it is a work of art at all, "it is one of a totally different sort." Thus Wittgenstein's point in reproaching Mahler—"you merely heard this from the others, this does not (really) belong to you"—begets its real philosophical thrust in a way that underscores the striking depth of Wittgenstein's ambivalence toward Mahler's musical persona: these musical gestures are merely Scheinarchitektur, not genuine avowals of the life of mankind—for how could they be?—and in this sense they are not authentic (unecht).

(Guter 2011:133)

Again, LW's judgment (in this case of Mahler's music) involves some kind of deep and 'organic' embedding of the musical utterance in the culture that it is part of, not conformity to this or that formal criterion. What is objected to is that Mahler - supposedly, i.e. according to LW- in the passages referred to pretends to use certain idioms in a 'classical'/familiar way but in fact *only apparently* does so.¹⁴⁵

What we retain from the above for the purposes of the overall argument of the present chapter, is the following:

- Throughout his writing and in his everyday life LW consistently emphasized the importance of **non-epistemic/non-propositional** aspects of our lives in which our Language Games, as well as our ethical and aesthetical values, are ultimately embedded.
- Both in ethical and aesthetical matters LW's stern criticism appears to have been primarily directed against various avatars of **inauthenticity/fakeness** (in the very general sense defined above): classical music should sound like classical music and what sounds like classical music should also *be* classical music; a bed should look like a bed and what looks like a bed should *be* a bed; a decent person's behavior should show who he/she is (sincerity, honesty, etc. vs. vanity, hypocrisy, etc.).

¹⁴⁵ In the original excerpt of *VB* (Wittgenstein 1989e:544–545), LW actually calls Mahler's music 'worthless' and - apparently without irony- ponders the question as to what Mahler should have done with his talents, explains why he (LW) was able to see that Mahler's music was worthless and Mahler wasn't, etc. This passage will help us -on another occasion- formulate a more critical account of LW's views on authenticity and the pitfalls inherent to that concept in general.

4.3 Epistemic authenticity

Here above I collected circumstantial evidence for the idea that authenticity is a core concept when it comes to understanding LW's modes of thought in general. In what follows I will try and formulate how the notion of authenticity/fakeness applies to the epistemic matters that make up the bulk of LW's work, and especially how it relates to his account of meaning, as discussed in the above.

Fakeness as a target of Wittgenstein's philosophical criticism

Let us start from the observation that LW's philosophical work (and the literature generated around it) show an impressive array of terms that denote 'fakeness' in one form or another (cf. also what we observed with respect to *Wittgenstein's Vienna* in section 4.1): illusion or delusion (Täuschung *PhU* §80, §§96-97, §110; vortäuschen *PhU* §251; vorspiegeln *PhU* §253; Illusion *PhU* §311, *PhU* §362; *BPhP2* §268); cf. also the title *Insight and Illusion: Themes in the Philosophy of Wittgenstein* (Hacker 1986)); sham (*PhU* §217: "Scheingesim"; *PhU* §270: "... daß die Annahme dieses Irrtums nur ein Schein war"); Luftgebäude (*PhU* §118);¹⁴⁶ fiction (fingieren *BGM2* §22, see below); pathos (*Pathos PhU* §110);¹⁴⁷ ostentatiousness (prahlerisch *BGM2* §21);¹⁴⁸ mystification (*Blue Book* p. 3); hocus pocus (*BGM2* §22, see below); slight of hand (*PhU* §308: Taschenspielerkunststück); alchemy (*BGM5* §16); etc.

Epistemic authenticity: examples taken from Wittgenstein's philosophy of mathematics

It is worth noting that -apart from the aesthetical notes in *Culture & Value* (cf. section 4.2)- LW's most vehemently moral criticisms can be found in the context of his work on mathematics.¹⁴⁹ The following excerpt -taken from LW's *Remarks on the*

¹⁴⁶ The translation 'house of cards' is not entirely adequate: a house of cards is something not very stable or solid, but it is something; Luftgebäude are *nothing*.

¹⁴⁷ Note the inadequacy of the English translation: "Language (or thought) is something unique"--this proves to be a superstition (*not* a mistake!), itself produced by grammatical illusions. // And now the impressiveness retreats to these illusions, to the problems." 'Impressiveness' completely misses the relevant connotations of 'pathos'. Interestingly, the term 'pathos', in that case denoting the 'givenness' of -what I would call here- the embedding of our epistemic abilities in the non-epistemic aspects of our lives, receives a quite different (if not opposite) connotation in Marc Van den Bossche's *Het pathos van het denken* (Van den Bossche 2003).

¹⁴⁸ Some of these terms also occur quite often in other functions as well (e.g. terms related to 'pretending' occur in a large number of contexts in which LW analyzes language games that involve the concept of 'pretending': pretending to be in pain, pretending to read, pretending to play a game, pretending to be (un)conscious or unwell, ... (e.g. in the context of arguments regarding the privateness of feelings); for typical examples, see e.g. *Z* §§568-571 or *PhPF*, xi, §§352-364.

¹⁴⁹ NB that LW's objections to the inauthentic do not only refer to the ethical but also to the aesthetical side of 'fakeness'. Aesthetical inauthenticity recalls cheesiness, kitsch, 'special effects' and ornamentations (for the

Foundations of Mathematics- displays a number of these terms, is particularly rich in interesting contrasts, and also shows how the notion of fakeness can take on an almost 'technical' function in what remains a discussion about the conclusion of Cantor's diagonal argument (as it is usually understood):

BGM2 §20-22

20. Bescheiden lautet der Satz: „Wenn man etwas eine Reihe reeller Zahlen nennt, so heißt die Entwicklung des Diagonalverfahrens auch eine ‚reelle Zahl‘, und zwar sagt man, sie sei von allen Gliedern der Reihe verschieden“.

21. Unser Verdacht sollte immer rege sein, wenn ein Beweis mehr beweist, als seine Mittel ihm erlauben. Man könnte so etwas ‚einen prahlerischen Beweis‘ nennen.

22. Der gebräuchliche Ausdruck fingiert einen Vorgang, eine Methode des Ordnen, die hier zwar anwendbar ist, aber nicht zum Ziele führt wegen der Zahl der Gegenstände, die größer ist als selbst die aller Kardinalzahlen.

Wenn gesagt würde: „Die Überlegung über das Diagonalverfahren zeigt Euch, daß der *Begriff* ‚reelle Zahl‘ viel weniger Analogie mit dem Begriff Kardinalzahl hat, als man, durch gewisse Analogien verführt, zu glauben geneigt ist“, so hätte das einen guten und ehrlichen Sinn. Es geschieht aber gerade das *Gegenteil*: indem die ‚Menge‘ der reellen Zahlen angeblich der Größe nach mit der der Kardinalzahlen verglichen wird. Die Artverschiedenheit der beiden Konzeptionen wird durch eine schiefe Ausdruckweise als Verschiedenheit der Ausdehnung dargestellt. Ich glaube und hoffe, eine künftige Generation wird über diesen Hokus Pokus lachen.¹⁵⁰

Immediately afterwards, in §23, LW talks about the “Krankheit einer Zeit” and how the bad health of our philosophical problems can only be cured by a change in our way of life. What -for our purposes- is remarkable in this excerpt is:

1. that LW does not object to Cantor's method as such, but against the usual 'prose' interpretation of it, in that the interpretation *pretends* that 'nothing happened' when the notion of 'number' (as in counting) is extended to the 'set' (scare quotes required) of real numbers;¹⁵¹
2. that LW formulates his objections to this apparently 'technical' matter in clearly ethical/aesthetical terms (cf. the words that I underlined in the above quotation) and immediately links his 'technical' objection to the broadest possible societal issues.

significance of the notion of 'ornamentation' with respect to both LW's life and his philosophy, see Brian McGuiness' 'Asceticism and ornament' (McGuiness 2002)).

¹⁵⁰ The underlining of terms with an ethical/aesthetical connotation is mine.

¹⁵¹ For LW's distinction between formal mathematics and 'prose' interpretation, see e.g. Floyd 2001.

Thus, the requirement that people and works of art should be sincere/authentic also applies to epistemic issues, for instance: what *looks like* a proof, should *be* a proof, and should *function* as proofs do within everyday language games (whatever those may be). This appears to have been one of the main points of LW's 'notorious' remarks about Gödel's incompleteness results (most notably *BGM1*, Anhang 3, §§8-19):¹⁵² again, LW was not in the first place concerned with the formal proof (which is just a piece of calculus as any other piece of calculus, and thus without particular philosophical importance); for LW, the problem is that it is not clear to what extent what *pretends to be* a proof of a theorem concerning the completeness of consistent formalisms (assuming that these terms mean what they always mean), is not *actually* a revolutionary reinterpretation of what the concepts 'consistency', 'proof', 'theorem', etc. traditionally mean. Even if we are not inclined to be as conservative as LW about the difference between legitimate extensions of the use of terms and frivolous nonsense, the above insights may still offer a crucial contribution to the issues surrounding meaning and formalism, as they are formulated in a very recent account, such as chapter 4 of Ferreirós 2015.¹⁵³ These more technical issues go far beyond what can be dealt with within the confines of this thesis and will give rise to a separate contribution on my part.¹⁵⁴

Sense as embedding and epistemic authenticity

We are now in a position to formulate the link between LW's critique of inauthenticity and his notion of sense as embedding (as developed in sections 2 and 3 above).

The issue of 'meaning' (in logic, mathematics, or natural language) is often viewed as a syntactic/semantic one (i.e. a matter of the relation between two (or more) systems of categories), but for LW sense can ultimately not be reduced to such language-internal matters. As we have seen, LW does not formulate sense in terms of syntactic/semantic well-formedness (nor of reference, for that matter), but in terms of function within a Language Game and ultimately within a Form of Life: what

¹⁵² Cf. Floyd 2001; Steiner 2001; Floyd and Putnam 2006; among many other contributions.

¹⁵³ NB that formalism is inherently related to the issue of 'sense' as we have construed it here, in that it implies decontextualization/depragmatization at its root: formalism, in a suitably broad sense of the word, implies a deliberate separation of linguistic items from their home context (whatever 'home context' may mean).

¹⁵⁴ The main challenge is to account for the sense of -say- set theory as a separate 'everyday' practice and thus as a source of sense in its own right vs. the sense of set theory in terms of its embedding (or lack of embedding, if we are to believe LW) within the encompassing Form of Life of which it is part.

makes a practice -including the words used in it- meaningful is the exact way in which it is embedded in a Form of Life, which includes other Language Games in which the same terms occur, but also -and crucially- many non-verbal aspects. A proper understanding of these non-verbal aspects may require a deep familiarity/acquaintance with the nuances of the encompassing culture that gives the LG its sense in the first place. In other words: understanding what something means (if anything) involves understanding the language game at hand and how and to what extent this language game fits in with the linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of the Form of Life / culture it is embedded in, and thus does or does not express the pre-verbal values that underlie it.

For LW, the notion of authenticity has thus a direct bearing on the technicalities of his account of meaning/sense and is therefore not 'external to' logic and epistemology: it operates at the core of the rationality that logic and epistemology are supposed to embody/model.

5. Wittgenstein's philosophy as critique

We started this chapter by highlighting a few apparently paradoxical aspects of LW's views on the nature and purpose of philosophy. In this section, I try to show that we may make some headway by focusing on the ethical/aesthetical biases that motivate LW's philosophy qua critique.

As pointed out by the advocates of the 'resolute' interpretation of the *TLP*, we simply have to face the fact that for LW *both* the problems of philosophy *and* the solutions, in *both* his own philosophy *and* the philosophical tradition, are really (*really*) nonsense, in the sense that this type of language use is disconnected from everyday language games and hence lacks the pragmatic embedding that makes things meaningful.

Whatever Read (2010) may claim (see section 3.3), the (as such correct) idea that in the end everything is somehow embedded in the everyday does not resolve the problem concerning the tension between LW's antirevisionist claims ('we leave everything as it is') and his critical practice ('the usual interpretation of set theory is hocus-pocus and should be laughed away'). However, the distinction between things that makes sense and those that do not in terms of (non-)everydayness, starts to make better sense once we understand that the notion of everydayness is ultimately not based on a 'descriptively' adequate criterion, but only makes sense in the context

of LW's critique of inauthenticity. From a Wittgensteinian point of view, there is no real gap between the technicalities of logic and epistemology and the -at first sight alien- 'existentialist' aspect embodied in the term 'epistemic authenticity': at the end of every formal or informal account of 'sense' (or any other epistemic category), there is our preverbal acquaintance with the practices and values from which the account derives its sense. If we are 'honest', we should ultimately evaluate the formal account in terms of how well it captures these values and accounts for the practices, and not the other way around.

Of course, I am not the first to observe that the critical aspect of LW's work is a crucial and pervasive one, and LW's approach is in many ways similar to a Kantian critique. P.M.S. Hacker, otherwise one of the standard-bearers of orthodox mainstream Wittgenstein exegesis, has interesting things to say on this matter:

More than any other philosophers, Kant and Wittgenstein were concerned with the nature of philosophy itself and sought to curb its metaphysical pretensions by clarifying its status and circumscribing what one may rationally hope for in philosophical investigation. Both saw philosophical and metaphysical *illusions of reason* as at least a large part of the subject, and the eradication of such illusions as a major goal of their work. And they shared a highly critical attitude towards traditional empiricism and rationalism alike.

(Hacker 1986:207, also quoted -with a mistake- in Hanna 2017:697) ¹⁵⁵

We have seen that the 'existential'-sounding authenticity-related concerns are indeed not something extraneous to LW's more technical philosophy,¹⁵⁶ but lie at the very core of his views on meaning, epistemology and logic.

¹⁵⁵ On the final page of his article on 'Wittgenstein and Kantianism', Robert Hanna adds the following to Hacker's remarks, highlighting the 'existential' aspects of the Kantian heritage: "[...] transcendental anthropology as practiced by Kant and Wittgenstein does not either seek a humanly impossible, absolutely justifying, pure rational insight into things-in-themselves, or draw Pyrrhonian skeptical conclusions from our inevitable and tragic failure to achieve a godlike "intellectual intuition" of ourselves and the world [*references to Kant omitted by FS*], or fall into scientism. For all three of these philosophical projects, whether dogmatically rationalistic, destructively skeptical, or reductively naturalistic, are equally inherently self-alienating and "inauthentic" in the existentialists' sense. [...] Otherwise put, with a tragic sense of life, Kant and Wittgenstein both fully recognize that we must renounce every variety of the bad faith of reason in order to make room for an authentic, autonomous, rational human life [...]" (Hanna 2017:697).

¹⁵⁶ For the intrinsically 'existential' aspect of LW's philosophy, cf. Hertzberg 2006.

6. Conclusions

It's now time to attempt to bring the various lines of thought I let flourish on their own in the above back to what they can contribute to the overall aims of the study. The core contents of this chapter, in terms of their contribution to the overall research questions underlying this study, consisted in a reflection on LW's conception of sense and nonsense and the role of the notion of everydayness therein. Let me briefly reconstruct the main lines of this account:

- LW advocates a pragmatic and holistic implementation of the notion of 'sense' as embedding in an encompassing practice and ultimately a Form of Life; this immediately yields a corresponding conception of 'nonsense' as a lack of embedding (section 2.2).
- Nonsense in this sense turned out to be in actual fact impossible: every actually occurring utterance is strictly speaking embedded in *some* practice (section 2.3).
- For LW, the difference between sense and nonsense hinges on the distinction between everyday/ordinary and non-everyday/non-ordinary/'metaphysical' practices (section 3).
- However, this distinction is deeply problematic: although we may be comfortable attributing 'everydayness' to some prototypical 'household' practices, there are no criteria that insightfully identify non-everyday practices in a 'neutral'/'analytical' way (section 3.3).
- The distinction appears to be motivated by an underlying ethical/aesthetical agenda that can best be formulated in terms of 'authenticity vs. fakeness', a conceptual distinction that can be shown to have been in the air in the cultural environment of which LW was part of (section 4.1) and to have had existential importance to LW (section 4.2).
- LW emphasizes the fact that authentic embedding in a Form of Life crucially involves non-propositional aspects that need not coincide with any formal (or even formalizable) criteria. Even apparently 'technical' issues of logic and epistemology are shown to ultimately depend on epistemic authenticity, qua expression of the practices and values that make up the form of life underlying and giving sense to logic and epistemology (section 4.3).

- LW's philosophy is thus inherently a critique of the Kantian type, reminding us of the fact that our formal epistemic practices ultimately can only be evaluated against the background of values that are not themselves formal or even epistemic.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷ In the above account, I have mostly tried to elucidate LW's point of view. While not feasible within the confines of this thesis, a critical approach to the notions everydayness and authenticity, featuring a comparative account of the role of these concepts in both LW's and MH's views, is in order, and forthcoming as a separate contribution (cf. section 3 of the General Conclusion below).

General Conclusion

For summaries, reviews and conclusions of each of the chapters I refer back to the concluding section of each chapter. The present General Conclusion aims at linking the results of the research presented in the three chapters back to the encompassing research question, as formulated in section 3 of the General Introduction:

What can be learnt from Wittgenstein and Heidegger with respect to the issue of the ontological status of 'practice' and its relation to concepts such as 'agency', 'objecthood', 'community/society', 'cognition' and 'knowledge' within the context of the practice turn in contemporary Philosophy of Science and Philosophy of Mathematics?

Thus, I will in the first place (in section 1 below) try to assess the potential impact of the contributions of both authors on the development of a consistently pragmatic ontological framework for the analysis of practice in Philosophy of Science and Philosophy of Mathematics.

In the course of the research presented in this thesis, the concepts everydayness and authenticity took on an unexpected importance. In section 2, I summarize my findings with respect to this aspect, insofar as they have a bearing on the main topic of this thesis.

Finally, in section 3, I briefly describe the perspectives that were opened by the research described in this thesis, both in terms of (1) a few lines of thought that could not find a home within the confines of the thesis and hence will give rise to forthcoming separate contributions, and of (2) the encompassing longer term project of which this thesis is a part.

1. Towards a practice-centered ontology

Our reading of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* and Wittgenstein's later work, however different these bodies of work may be, yielded an unexpectedly similar outlook on

what we have called the ‘ontology of the practice turn’: both present practice as an inherently structural-holistic concept and construe practice as an irreducible aspect of our making sense of the world.¹⁵⁸

As far as their contributions with respect to the overall topic of the present study go, both authors have been complementary: Heidegger has obviously more to offer as far as the development of a detailed and stable conceptual apparatus goes (chapter 2), but LW has been more helpful in positioning the holistic/structural approach against rivaling points of view (chapter 1), as well as in thematizing the fragmentation and heterogeneity of our everyday practice and in making us understand in a very concrete fashion that our ability to make sense of things is ultimately not an epistemic ability (chapter 3).

Towards a structuralist-holistic account of objecthood and agency

In section 5 of chapter 1, I proposed the following definitions of holism resp. structuralism (about practice):

- holism = the fact that *practices are construed as complex structures, that encompass the agents, the behavioral patterns and whatever parts of the outside world may be relevant to it;*
- structuralism = the claim that *the very identity of entities involved in practices (agents, tools, ingredients, goals, values, ...) is determined by the relations between them within the structure of an encompassing practice.*

As far as concrete contributions to the development of an operational framework go, Heidegger has proven much more immediately useful than Wittgenstein (whose conception of philosophy is explicitly opposed to such theorizing).

In the lines of thought dealing with *Zuhandenheit*, Heidegger gives a lucid and still useful practice-based account of **objecthood**:

- the entities in the *Umwelt* of a practice entertain a structural relation to the practice (e.g. the functions of the nails, the hammer and the shoe within the cobbler’s HAMMERING practice);

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Braver 2012, p. 81-82: “Heidegger and later Wittgenstein embrace holism, according to which an object or word derives its nature and meaning from its place within a network, all other members of which likewise draw their sense from their interrelationships. This framework eliminates atomistic determinacy: if an item’s meaning is established by its context, then altering this context changes its meaning—and the greater the change, the sketchier and thinner becomes the item’s connection with its earlier sense.”

- the notion of *Bedeutsamkeit*/relevance points toward a typology of relevance relations that is constitutive of the ontological status of these entities (e.g. categories such as ingredient, product, tool, infrastructure, ...);
- various kinds of perturbations of practice result in the fact that the entities involved manifest themselves in a different way, though the basic structural relation between object and practice is not suspended;
- similarly, even in such practices as JUST LOOKING AROUND or SCIENTIFIC OBSERVATION, practice and its structural relation to the entities involved in it are not really suspended.¹⁵⁹

Similarly, the pragmatic strands in *Sein und Zeit* yield a coherent pragmatic account of **agency and sociality**:¹⁶⁰

- in defining *Dasein* as *Mitsein* (as well as *Selbstsein*) Heidegger construes sociality as a structural aspect of the very being of a human individual;
- again, the idea of relevance opens the door of a typology of practice-internal relations that define agent-roles in terms of their function within a practice;
- many aspects of Heidegger's 'positive' conception of 'das Man' are highly relevant for a theory of agency in a practice-based approach, most notably:
 - o the idea that what allows us to make sense of our everyday practices is our taking up a role that is in principle independent of our individual selves;
 - o the notion of 'publicity' / *Öffentlichkeit* (cf. also Wittgenstein's argument against the possibility of a 'private language'), applied to the shared *Umwelt* of co-agents, but easily extended to the intentions, goals and attitudes involved in taking up any role (cf. Heidegger's 'Manselbst').

It may be important to point out that this holistic-structural account is not necessarily compatible with a number of conceptions that are currently popular in practice-turn-inspired approaches to Philosophy of Science and Philosophy of Mathematics:

- the practice-internal structural relations stipulated in the Wittgensteinian-Heideggerian account is at odds with the idea of 'interplay' between agent and

¹⁵⁹ We have noted that Heidegger does not really take into account the dynamics inherent to all human activities qua behavioral processes (chapter 2 section 2.5(1)), but I have shown elsewhere how these aspects can be tackled in a relevance-based model involving a more explicit account of the dynamics and intentional structure of meaningful action (Scheppers 2003; Scheppers 2011, chapter 13).

¹⁶⁰ However, Heidegger's mix of pragmatic and 'existentialist' strands in his account of *das Man* is notoriously incoherent. Cf. chapter 2, section 5.

practice, or agent and world, or even between 'practices' among each other, in that interplay (at least) suggests the ontological autonomy of the 'players' involved in the interplay;

- the Wittgensteinian-Heideggerian holistic approach is also not straightforwardly compatible with standard cognitive and otherwise agent-centered approaches, in that the latter tend to have a hard time capturing the crucial idea that cognition is necessarily mediated by public/shared/normative practices;¹⁶¹
- within a thoroughly pragmatic account of objecthood (cf. Heidegger's *Zuhandenheit*) the issue of the ontological status ('objectivity' etc.) of epistemic (incl. mathematical) 'objects' simply disappears, in that these items acquire their status from their exact roles in the practices in which they occur, alongside tables and chairs, my two hands, the sun and the moon, Heidegger's boat on the beach, the Higgs boson, Mickey Mouse and the aether;
- for the status of knowledge within a pragmatic framework, see below.

The fragmentation and contingency of practice and the problem of the unity/uniqueness/transcendence of the world

The fragmentation of everyday practice into a large variety of more or less autonomous practices is consistently thematized in Wittgenstein's accounts in terms of language games (cf. sections 4.7 and 5.4 of chapter 1).

Such fragmentation is much more problematic for Heidegger, because it is at odds with his insistence on the 'unity' of both the 'authentic self' and the world at large. Heidegger thus shares the abhorrence of anything that reeks of relativism with standard naturalism.¹⁶² To his credit, we have noted his awareness of the problem.

In the lines of thought I present here, no attempt is being made at mitigating relativism/pluralism, which now manifests itself not only at the level of different 'cultures' or individual agents, but even from one practice to the next, each practice coming with its own ontology, within a single culture and within a single life (DISCUSSING PARTICLE PHYSICS does not imply the same categories of objects, agent-roles, intentions, etc. as DOING THE DISHES, or as FIGHTING A BOXING MATCH). This

¹⁶¹ However, at least part of the cognitive and neuro-based sector has already shifted towards the view that intentionality/aboutness/meaning/... cannot be accounted for in terms of 'in the brain' models (cf. Hurley 1998 (quoted in chapter 1, section 5.2), but also various contributions that make the bridge between neuroscience and phenomenology (Wheeler 2005; Gallagher 2005; Gallagher and Zahavi 2008; Noë 2004)).

¹⁶² It bears repeating that Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* -despite its reputation- actually shares very many of its concerns with standard Anglo-Saxon naturalism (cf. e.g. chapter 2, section 4.3).

idea may contribute to the burgeoning recent literature on relativism and it would be interesting to see how it fares as a contribution to ontology proper.

Sense as embedding and the status of 'knowledge'

In Philosophy of Science and in Philosophy of Mathematics, knowledge often remains a central concept, even in those approaches that self-identify with the practice turn.¹⁶³ However, in chapter 3, we have seen how Wittgenstein construes 'sense' as a matter of embedding in a language game, and ultimately of the embedding of that language game in 'our life', which inherently includes physical, biological, and cultural aspects that may entirely escape epistemic formalization (cf. also chapter 1). This approach implies that the status of knowledge within scientific practice has become a lot less self-evident than it may have been before the practice turn: in section 4.4 of chapter 1, I have argued that a pragmatic account should *show* what the exact role of knowledge is within a scientific practice (if any), rather than simply assume that knowledge is the key item.

The practice turn and standard 'physicalist' / 'naturalist' / 'realist' ontology

The pluralist ontology that emerges from this holistic-cum-structuralist approach is obviously **at odds with classical physicalist ontology**, which is a type of monism, corresponding to the methodological reductionism that characterizes classical science.

On the other hand, both the acknowledged originators of the practice turn under scrutiny in this thesis -despite their differences- construed practice in such a way that it is explicitly not reducible to the workings of the individual agent (whether qua subject, or qua organism, or qua autonomous 'self'). In section 5 of chapter 1 (on Wittgenstein's account) I have shown that the holistic-structuralist ontology is the only way in which we can make sense of practices as an account of meaning: reductionist readings of the notion of practice do not have any advantage to other accounts.

I would personally be prepared to try and take the ontological claims seriously as a 'heavy', 'metaphysical' ontology, but for the purposes of construing an analytically viable practice-oriented approach to Philosophy of Science or Philosophy of Mathematics, a 'light', 'methodological', 'discursive' conception of ontology should also work, for those so inclined.

¹⁶³ The title *Mathematical Knowledge and the Interplay of Practices* (Ferreirós 2015) is emblematic in this respect.

In any case, taking the ontological status of practice (including its relations to other concepts) more seriously than is currently the case, should help us tighten up our conceptual frameworks.

2. Everydayness, symmetry and the status of scientific and philosophical practices

Everydayness -and its link to authenticity- was not scheduled to be part of the research topics for this thesis but forced itself upon us in the course of our readings. A number of our findings in this matter -however interesting in their own right- will not be taken up in this section, as they do not immediately link back to the overall research question (but cf. section 3 here below); here, I will focus on a few aspects that have a direct bearing on issues in Philosophy of Science and Philosophy of Mathematics.

Everydayness, symmetry and the status of science and philosophy as practices

In section 4 of chapter 2, we have seen how Heidegger makes the difference between (1) 'pragmatic' objecthood (Zuhandenheit) and (2) 'objective' objecthood (Vorhandenheit) correspond to the difference between (a) 'everyday' practices and (b) science and other contemplative practices, which is fully coherent with his overall argument. However, at the same time, Heidegger also points out (correctly) how actual scientific practices are -qua practices- not structurally different from any other practices. In section 4.3 of chapter 2 I have therefore argued that the ontologically special status attributed to science and the corresponding Vorhandenheit is ultimately not based on pragmatic analysis and from a pragmatic point of view should be abandoned in favor of a symmetrical approach.

Thus, for the purposes of this thesis and its stated research questions, the most directly relevant conclusion of our analysis of 'everydayness' is a negative one: the highly problematic nature of the everyday vs. non-everyday dichotomy should convince us to simply drop it in favor of a 'neutral'/'symmetrical' account. What is advocated here is not only the symmetry between good/successful and bad/unsuccessful cases (as opposed to the frankly whiggish attitude still prevalent in large areas of Philosophy of Science, and especially Philosophy of Mathematics),

but also the symmetry between the technical practices under scrutiny and any other practice.

Everydayness/ordinariness and authenticity in Wittgenstein and Heidegger; philosophy as critique

It is interesting to note that Heidegger and Wittgenstein have opposite implementations of the dichotomy everyday vs. non-everyday:

- for Heidegger, the notion of 'everyday' -more specifically the 'average everyday'- has a mostly negative connotation, as the source of the fragmentation of the self and the resulting lack of authenticity; CONTEMPLATION, SCIENCE, THEORY are the primary avatars of the non-everyday;
- for Wittgenstein, the everyday/ordinary practices are the ultimate locus of meaningfulness/sense; 'metaphysics' (in the sense of 'fake' propositions) are the opposite of everyday (though science appears to be considered a straightforward 'everyday' kind of practice).

I have pointed out that -despite these differences- the functions of 'everydayness' are similar in both cases: everydayness is the way in which both Heidegger and Wittgenstein bridge the gap between (1) a pragmatic, apparently value-free analysis of actual practice and (2) a ethical/aesthetical strand in which authenticity is in both cases the central value.¹⁶⁴

It is immediately obvious and universally acknowledged that authenticity is a key concept in *S&Z* (cf. chapter 2 sections 5.4 and 7 above). Still, it was worthwhile to take a close look at how exactly it links up with the pragmatic strand in *S&Z* that we were concerned with in this study.

The importance of authenticity in Wittgenstein's work is more surprising and less well acknowledged in the exegetical literature, and the topic would perhaps not have arisen, if not for reading Wittgenstein alongside Heidegger. In sections 4 and 5 of chapter 3 I have briefly suggested how Wittgenstein's philosophy can be read as a Kant-like critique of formalism/decontextualization in general, which has interesting implications for Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Mathematics and the self-understanding of Philosophy as such.

In any case, the arguments presented in the above should stimulate reflection on, and awareness of, the deep-rooted intertwining of our conceptual frameworks with underlying values and agendas.

¹⁶⁴ Braver (2012) does not seem to offer a straightforward account of this difference.

3. Perspectives

The research that is presented in this thesis also produced materials that the formal constraints that inevitably come with this kind of exercise prevented from including, but will give rise to separate contributions on my part. The following items are taking shape:

- a contribution in which I will start from a close reading of Wittgenstein's remarks on Gödel's results in the light of the notions of 'sense as embedding' and 'epistemic authenticity' (cf. section 4.3 of chapter 3 above) and show how these apply to current issues surrounding meaning and formalism in Philosophy of Mathematics (cf. e.g. Ferreirós 2015, chapter 4);
- an elaboration of the ethical corollaries of my reading of everydayness and authenticity in Heidegger and Wittgenstein (briefly mentioned in section 7 of chapter 2 and section 6 of chapter 3);
- a summary overview of the findings of this research as a whole, along the lines of the present General Conclusion, but presented as a contribution to the emerging field of 'Heidegger-and-Wittgenstein-studies' and including a more comparative and historical focus which also allows for a more explicit dialogue with i.a. Braver 2012.

More importantly, and in the longer run, I hope to address the broader issues concerning the ontology of the practice turn, which constitute the background from which this study emerged (see General Introduction, sections 1 and 3), and which gave it its *raison d'être*. Building on my previous work in the fields of discourse analysis and linguistic pragmatics (most notably Scheppers 2003 and Scheppers 2011), in the light of the lessons learnt from the research presented in the above, and informed by a number of detailed analyses of various academic *and* household practices, I intend to further develop the radically pragmatic ontological framework sketched in section 1 here above and (1) show how it may help shed light on a number of selected current issues in the Philosophy of Science and the Philosophy of Mathematics, as well as (2) investigate its value and limits as a contribution to ontology as such. This intention should give rise to a formal proposal for a research project in the upcoming months.

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¹⁶⁵ At the date I submit this thesis, I have not yet been able to gain access to the published version of this contribution. I quote Read 2010 from the draft made available through the author's academia.edu account: https://www.academia.edu/205515/Ordinary_and_everyday_language [last accessed 20170517].

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