

KRIPKE'S DOUBTS ABOUT MEANING

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In his book *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (1982) Saul Kripke has proposed an interpretation of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), at the center of which stands a new sceptical paradox and a sceptical solution to this paradox.¹ This interpretation is strongly contested. I myself don't believe it to be correct, however I won't engage here in questions about interpretation—Colin McGinn has already offered the most important remarks on this in the first two chapters of his (1984)—but I will say something about the paradox itself and its solution. Kripke emphasizes that he only intends to provide a deeper understanding of Wittgenstein's statements rather than an evaluation (viz. WR, IX, pp.5, 31), and yet I will speak of the "Kripkean paradox" since one can hardly attribute it to Wittgenstein. I will try to show that there is a direct solution to the paradox, that the argument for the sceptical thesis is invalid, and that the sceptical solution offers no escape from the sceptical challenge. Others have already done this, an especially comprehensive account has been offered by C. McGinn (1984), but since Kripke's thoughts continue to fascinate,² it is perhaps useful to give once again a systematic analysis of Kripke's position.

1. The New Sceptical Paradox

"Wittgenstein has invented a new form of scepticism. Personally I am inclined to regard it as the most radical and original problem that philosophy has seen to date", Kripke writes (WR, p.60). This new form of scepticism goes far beyond epistemological scepticism, debated since the Ancients, which maintains that we cannot tell whether our statements about the world are true or false. Stronger still is the scepticism about linguistic reference, according to which we cannot be certain whether we are saying anything about the world with our statements because we can't be sure that the terms we employ signify objectively existing things. If the terms don't signify, then the statements don't express any existing or nonexisting state of affairs in the world. Epistemological scepticism, like the scepticism about linguistic reference, begins from an ontological realism, mean-

¹ I abbreviate these two works in the following by WR and PI. Quotations from WR are referred to by page numbers, quotations from PI by paragraphs.

² Cf. Stegmüller (1986).

ing that the world in its existence and form is independent of human thought and experience. This independence, in certain formulations, grows into a transcendence of reality to our knowledge and speech. Therefore, authors such as Nelson Goodman, Hilary Putnam and Richard Rorty have given up realism. But when faced with meaning scepticism the withdrawal from realism is no escape, because meaning scepticism is not about whether statements about the world express objectively existent or nonexistent states of affairs, but rather about whether they express well defined states of affairs at all, no matter if of an objective or a subjective nature. Kripke's scepticism is such a meaning scepticism. In fact, this form is not quite new, the Sophists had already debated about whether all of the sentences of ordinary language are vague, in the sense that there are always several interpretations of a sentence assigning different truth-values to it. But Kripke has given the meaning scepticism a new form and foundation by using ideas he found in Wittgenstein. This scepticism is concerned not so much with the intersubjective meaning of linguistic expressions, but rather with the speaker's meaning, that, what he intends to express by the expression.

Kripke shows the paradox by offering an example about how we use the word 'plus' (WR, pp.7–22). In reference to a one-place predicate F , the sceptical thesis reads as follows:

- T) There is no criterion for whether the application of F by a speaker X to some new object a is correct—that is to say, an object to which X has not yet attributed the predicate F or thought of in connection with his applications of F .

The justification of this thesis looks like this: the application of F to a by X is correct, iff X has up to this point already associated a certain meaning with F , that is, X has meant a certain property E by F , and a indeed has this property E . But there is no fact which would establish that X has so far meant the property E by F . The following are the only candidates for such a fact:

- a) The past applications of F by X . However, these applications are consistent with the assumption that so far X has meant by F a property E' which is different from E , for instance a Goodman-like counterpart of E , that is to say an E' that fits exactly all those objects which either X has taken into consideration before the present time t and which have the property E , or which X has not taken into consideration before t and which do not have the quality E .

- b) The previous intentions of X concerning the use of F , that is to say the intentions concerning future uses of F in certain cases. The same argument against candidate (a) also holds good here.

- c) X 's choice of a certain general definition of F or some general criteria for the use of F . But had X for example decided to connect F with objects for which the predicates G and H also obtain, this pushes the problem only one step away,

because one still faces the question of which criteria *X* might have used to associate *G* and *H* with a particular meaning (WR, pp. 15ff.).

d) *X* has associated with *F* or *F*-applications certain psychological states (emotions, sensations) which may be introspectively experienced. But it is unclear what kind of states these could be or even how subjective experiences can distinguish properties of objects. How does the fact that the new object *a* produces in me the same feeling as was produced by earlier *F*-instances justify my application of *F* to *a*?

e) *X* has acquired certain dispositions to use *F*. Kripke objects against this, first, that dispositions of *X* to use *F* do not uniquely correspond to the possible meanings which *X* assigns to *F*: occasional applications of *F* by *X* to objects which don't have the property *E* don't necessarily show that *X* doesn't mean *E* by *F*. Dispositions exhibit a factual behavior, but lack normative character; they don't admit of the distinction between correct and incorrect applications. Secondly, for Kripke our dispositions are finite, i.e. they are determined for only finitely many cases, while properties are defined for a potentially infinite number of cases (WR, pp. 22–37).

What holds for monadic predicates also holds for polyadic predicates, functional expressions, sentential operators, and even, as McGinn has emphasized, for names.³ Thus, the sceptical argument concerns all linguistic expressions.

Kripke rightly emphasizes that this scepticism is not about the reliability of memory: for even if *X* or another person is completely informed about the entire behavioral and mental history of *X*, he cannot ascertain whether *X* has, up to this point, meant the property *E* by *F*. According to Kripke, it follows from this that there is no fact which constitutes *X*'s having-meant-*E*-by-*F* (WR, pp. 21). The sceptical thesis *T* is also not meant as a form of truth-scepticism, for one can assume in the context of Kripke's discussion that the application of *F* to *a* is true or false and that there are also criteria for establishing claims of this kind. Finally, *T* is not an epistemological scepticism. It doesn't concern the question of whether I can know that *a* has the property *E*, nor whether others can know what I mean by my use of *F*.

The consequence of the sceptical arguments is thus: if there is no fact that someone has meant something by some word in the past, then there can be no fact that he means something by his use of it right now, for otherwise it would be a fact tomorrow that he has, in the past, meant something by it (WR, p. 21). The result seems to be a total nihilism of meaning. The reference to a meaning in the past was only a tactical move on the part of the sceptic in order to avoid being susceptible right from the start to the objection that, if there were no fact

³ Cf. McGinn (1984, pp. 141f.).

of his meaning something by what he said, his theses and arguments would be senseless.

2. A Direct Solution of the Problem

Kripke suspects (WR, p.5) that to attempt to present the sceptical argument precisely is to some extent to falsify it. I share this conjecture. The argument will probably sound quite implausible to the unprejudiced reader given a brief description like the one I gave.⁴ For obviously the list of candidates for facts that could establish the claim that *X* has meant the property *E* by his use of *F* is incomplete. One would claim that the fact for which Kripke is looking just is the fact that *X* has meant *E* by *F*. But Kripke is willing to countenance facts of meaning, i.e. semantical facts in the wider sense, only if they are reducible to other, non-semantic facts. I will refer to this supposition in what follows as the “critical premise” of the sceptical argument. Although it is by no means plausible, Kripke offers no further justification for this premise. Many mental predicates, like “believing”, “seeing” and “wanting”, are not definable by others, but this does not imply that they are senseless or that the phenomena of believing, seeing and wanting do not exist.⁵ The practical or even principal impossibility of defining meaning with the help of only non-semantic concepts implies nothing about the existence of facts of meaning, just as the non-reducibility of the mental to the physical does not call the existence of the mental into question.

Now Wittgenstein criticizes the conception according to which the understanding of a (monadic) predicate consists in grasping the property for which it stands. Indeed, the grasping of universals considered as platonistic entities, as Frege has described it, for instance, is an obscure business.⁶ According to Wittgenstein, a predicate does not obtain its meaning through the assignment of a property to it, but rather by its being used in a certain way. Consequently, its use should not be explained by reference to a property, but, on the contrary, the property expressed by it should be explained by its use. Because this approach is attractive in several ways, I want to show that even from its point of view there is a fact of the matter concerning the understanding of a predicate, and, therefore, that this approach does not imply the Kripkean paradox.

⁴ To avoid the suspicion to have represented Kripke’s arguments in an incorrect or unfair way, I have kept very close to his own formulations, as the comparison with WR, pp.8–22 will show.

⁵ Similar remarks have been made by McGinn (1984, pp.151ff.) and Wright (1984).

⁶ Cf. Kutschera (1989, ch. 10).

Wittgenstein and Kripke say a lot about the “use” of linguistic expressions, but they haven’t taken the trouble to explain this notoriously ambiguous term. By the “use” of a term we normally mean the way, type or mode of its use, but Kripke and even Wittgenstein sometimes mean the set of particular cases in which the term has been used, the set of its applications, the tokens as against the type of its use. Moreover, in both cases one can mean either the correct or the actual use. Wittgenstein discusses modes of use under the title of “following a rule”. The expression ‘rule’ is ambiguous, too: a rule can be an explicitly formulated instruction or maxim or it can be a regularity. According to Wittgenstein, one follows a rule if one behaves in a certain way, that is if one’s behavior exhibits a certain regularity. He emphasizes that one need not have an explicit instruction in one’s head which guides one’s behavior.⁷ This way of speaking is unfortunate, because “following a rule” usually means that one obeys an explicit rule and is being guided by it. But, if we follow Wittgenstein’s way of speaking, then, for him, the possibility of following instructions presupposes the ability to follow a rule,⁸ individually as well as collectively. This ability, for him, is a basic fact which cannot be further explained. Although Kripke doesn’t offer a clear discussion of this point, we must interpret him as denying the possibility of following a rule as an individual and of an individual mode of behavior. Kripke interprets Wittgenstein incorrectly when he makes reference to the following claim: “Hence it is not possible to obey a rule “privately”: otherwise thinking one was obeying a rule would be the same as obeying it.” (PI, §202). ‘Privately’ (‘privatim’) does not mean here “only for oneself”, but rather “not public”. Wittgenstein allows only for those types of behavior which consist in the fact that someone reacts in an intersubjectively observable manner to intersubjectively observable conditions.⁹ For Kripke, on the contrary, individual dispositions of behaviour are “finite”, as we have seen (WR, p.26ff.), i.e. they are defined for only finitely many cases, and, therefore, they don’t determine modes of behavior, but only classes of instances of behavior. Thus, Kripke denies that individual persons, within a limited span of time, really behave in a certain manner; he claims instead that there are only the instances of behavior during this time. But this is not only un-Wittgenstein-

⁷ Wittgenstein even says that an (explicit) rule as a maxime which one chooses for oneself can never determine a type of behaviour; cf. PI, §201.

⁸ This is emphasized by Baker and Hacker in (1984) and McGinn in (1984). Wittgenstein accepts, for example in PI, §187, counterfactual conditionals about individual behavior, in particular about the use of words; and he can do this only if he accepts types of individual behavior. His critique is directed only against the view that the use of a word is explained by reference to an abstract entity of meaning, by an explicit rule or by mental images.

⁹ Similar McGinn (1984, p.79).

ian—it is absurd: a behavioral disposition is not a finite class of pairs of concrete situations or stimuli and concrete responses to them. We can explain a single response in terms of a disposition, but an explanation in terms of a class of stimulus-response pairs would be circular. If there is a behavioural disposition we can say that “if this situation would have occurred, he would have reacted in this manner”, but, stimulus-response pairs are not a basis for such counterfactual conditionals. Moreover, an application of a predicate, as Kripke thinks about it, is already a mode of use. It does not just consist in the fact that a particular speaker applies *F* to an object *a* at a certain time *t*, but in the fact that the speaker generally (at different times) applies *F* to *a*, or that everyone applies *F* to *a*.¹⁰

Now, Kripke’s paradox is not just about a person *X* using a predicate *F* in a certain manner, but rather about him using it in a certain sense, understanding it in a certain way.¹¹ If we can maintain that, we can also say of single instances of the use of *F* by *X* that they are correct or incorrect, i.e., either that they correspond to the sense which *X* associates with *F* or they don’t correspond (for example because *X* has made a slip of tongue). Now we can claim that *X* understands the predicate *F* in the way he uses it intentionally. For instance, I use the predicate ‘red’ in order to describe red things. Therefore I understand it as a means of describing red things, if I wish to describe something as red and use the word in this intention. Thus Kripke must deny that there is something like intentionally following a rule. But again, this is completely implausible, because there are certainly techniques which we apply in certain situations and which, if applied in such a way, are cases of intentional behavior. “Intentional” does not mean that one must first make a detailed plan of how to proceed and then carry out the plan in practice. In most cases, a technique also does not consist in following explicit instructions or maxims, but rather consists in an intuitive knowledge of how to do something, which results from the experience of previous behavior. For example, I have acquired a certain technique for mountain climbing, which has been successful and which guides my behavior in climbing. I could not give a detailed description of it, but I intuitively know what I have to do, even in new situations provided they are not too different from those which I have previously experienced. I “blindly follow the rule” (PI, §219), which does not mean “I continue in an arbitrary manner”, but rather that

¹⁰ Cf. also Hoffman (1985, p.24).

¹¹ In sentences of the form ‘Someone understands the word *A* in this and this way’ the verb ‘understand’ is not an epistemic success verb like in ‘Somebody understands the word *A*’. The second sentence says that somebody knows how *A* is generally applied, i.e., that he knows *A*’s intersubjective meaning. However, this is not implied by the first sentence. Here *A* may also be a word of the private idiolect of the person.

"I don't need any explicit instruction, because my intuition tells me what to do". Such a technique does not determine my behavior, for I may deviate from it in certain cases, intentionally or non-intentionally. The rule guides my behavior only if I want to be guided by it, and even then only if there is no unconscious mistake. Our ability to speak is such a technique, i.e. an intuitive knowledge of how to use words and sentences for certain purposes. We apply predicates with a high degree of certainty, provided that the necessary factual information is at our disposal. We know how to apply predicates even if we can't give a complete description of this knowledge. This knowing-how is nothing else but our understanding of predicates.

There are two reasons why this conception of the understanding of predicates, which was meant as a concession to Wittgenstein, can't be attributed to him without restrictions. The first reason lies in the fact that Wittgenstein was not only sceptical about meaning entities, but also about mental states like knowing or intending. He was at least close to the behavioristic view that mental states or events are at most unimportant accompaniments of physical behavior and can be cancelled out of the analysis. This makes the distinction between intentional and non-intentional behavior doubtful, for then one depends solely on the empirically manifest acts of speaking, and the distinction between correct and incorrect application instances of a predicate, as questioned by Kripke, can no longer be made. Wittgenstein thinks that the understanding of linguistic expression is not a mental process, for by a "mental process" he understands only phenomena such as the "decrease or increase of a sensation of pain, the hearing of a melody, a sentence" (PI, §154). Of course, one can fix the meaning of the expression 'mental process' in this way, but then the claim that understanding is not a mental process does not entail that understanding is not psychological or mental in the usual sense of these words. Believing, desiring and intending are not mental processes in this narrow sense either, but, together with understanding, they are the main examples of those phenomena which we usually call "mental"; and so if taken in the sense of ordinary language—which according to Wittgenstein is basically sound and must be "off limits" to philosophy—it is nonsense to say that they are not mental. If I understand the word 'cello', I have no special cello-feelings, of course, or feelings of understanding, I don't perceive anything, there is no manifest psychological state or mental process. But rather I know what the word means and can use it in the right way, or I know something about celli, for example, how they look and what they are good for, or I understand what someone means who uses this word, etc. That understanding is not a feeling or a perception is a bad argument for the claim that it is not mental. Since the species of behaviorists today is practically extinct, there is no need for us to say anything further against the thesis that mental phenomena are reducible to observable behavior.

The second difficulty in attributing the conception of understanding sketched above to Wittgenstein consists in the fact that he argues against the view that the understanding of an expression determines its future applications. He says: “The steps [in our case: the future applications of a predicate] are really already taken, even before I take them in writing or orally or in thought”. And it seemed as if they were in some unique way predetermined, anticipated—as only the act of meaning can anticipate reality” (PI, §188). And: “It is as if we could grasp the whole use of the word in a flash” (PI, §191). He critically comments on these sentences as follows: “You have no model of this superlative fact, but you are seduced into using a super-expression. (It might be called a philosophical superlative.)” (PI, §191). This is obviously a twofold confusion: The mastery of a technique is misinterpreted as determining future behavior as well as factual or imaginary execution in all particular cases. My present understanding of a predicate *F* of course does not determine the applications which I will make of *F* in the future, it only fixes (intuitive or explicit) criteria for further applications. Moreover, it does not require that all possible applications of *F* are lying “before my eyes”, that “properly speaking” I have realized them already. Mastery of a concept, the ability to discriminate objects with it, does not mean that one knows all its instances, and to know how to use a predicate does not mean to know every object to which it can be applied.¹² The “singular predetermination” by meaning or understanding, about which Wittgenstein speaks, is one of the most common things there are, only it must not be misinterpreted as a determination of future behavior, nor as a mental anticipation of all possible applications. If I know how to climb this means neither that I have already climbed in my imagination all the walls, ridges and chimneys, nor that my future behavior in climbing is determined. The choice of strategies, the understanding of a predicate is not some kind of “superlative fact”, and talk about it is no “super-expression”, but it is something completely normal. Wittgenstein applies the old trick of presenting the opponent’s view as silly as possible and discrediting it verbally in order to save himself the trouble of sound argumentation.

So the result is this: One can regard the understanding of a predicate by a person as a legitimate fact even if, in the spirit of Wittgenstein, one regards not

¹² Wittgenstein draws a parallel between the understanding of a predicate and the way in which we teach it other persons. He says: “But if a person has not yet got the concepts, I shall teach him to use the words by means of examples and by practice.—And when I do this I do not communicate less to him than I know myself” (PI, §208). If I understand the predicate then I know how to use it, I know its type of use. But I teach the student only single applications by help of which he has to grasp this general use. In this sense I teach him less than I know myself—at least in the sense of a technical knowledge, a competence.

the meaning of linguistic expressions, but their use as fundamental. The sense of a word, however, then has to be determined not by its actual, but by its intended use. Since nobody doubts that it is possible to know how to use a hammer, and since Wittgenstein likes to compare words with tools (cf. PI, §11), a Wittgensteinian can hardly deny that it is possible to know how to use a word. The direct solution of the sceptical paradox consists therefore simply in pointing out that the sceptical argument is not sound because it gives no reasonable grounds for why the understanding of linguistic expressions, and the knowledge of how to use them, should not constitute a genuine fact.

According to Kripke, a direct solution to the paradox must satisfy two conditions: it must (a) show a fact in the mental history of a person *X* which constitutes her “meaning-something-with-predicate *F*”, and it must (b) show what justifies her in attributing *F* to a new object. We have already seen that condition (a) is satisfiable: that *X* understands or uses *F* in a certain way “constitutes” *X*’s “meaning-something-with *F*”. Concerning (b): What justifies me in applying *F* to a new object is that I use *F* for the description of objects of a special kind, and I believe that *a* is an object of this kind. The question how I know that I use *F* in this manner makes no more sense than the question how I know that I believe something: my own present intentions are as evident to me as my own present beliefs. I can doubt whether I understood the word ‘cello’ when I was six years old or whether I will still understand it in the same way as today when I’m 85 years, but I cannot doubt if I understand it now in the way I actually understand it.

3. The Sceptical Solution

The sceptical thesis says: it is not possible for someone to associate with a word a meaning which could determine how he should use this word in the future. A direct solution to the paradox, as suggested above, consists in a critique of the justification of this thesis. A sceptical solution, on the other hand, accepts the sceptical objection to the evidence usually brought forward for the opposing common sense thesis (that there are facts of meaning something with a word), but shows that it does not depend on this evidence, but rather may be justified—with eventual modifications—in a different way that is not affected by the sceptical objection (cf. WR, pp.66ff.). For example, the sceptical solution of the problem of induction accepts that inductive inferences are neither logically, nor empirically justifiable, but points out that—under certain circumstances—they may be represented by valid conditional subjective probability claims. In our case the sceptical solution has to show first under which conditions one may claim that somebody correctly applies a predicate in a particular case, and when one is justified to say that, if he applies it correctly, then he

must attribute it to a certain object or cannot apply it to this object (WR, p.108). The sceptical solution has moreover to give criteria which tell us when someone understands a predicate. As a sceptical solution it must be consistent with the assumption that for the single speaker there exist no facts in his previous behavior, nor in his mental history which could distinguish his application of the predicate to a new case as correct, or which attests a certain understanding of the predicate (WR, p.89). Kripke's solution consists in referring to the use within a linguistic community *P*. The collective use in *P* is the criterion for whether the individual *X* has used it correctly. Thus, *X* uses the predicate *F* correctly if he uses it—at least mostly—in the way in which it is commonly used in *P*. If he does this, then we say he understands the predicate *F*. We can say, furthermore, that if somebody uses *F* correctly, then he has to apply or deny *F* to an object *a* if *F* is generally applied or denied to it by the members of *P*.

The agreement in the use of a word in *P* is not explained by the fact that all members of *P* mean the same thing by this word, the contention is just the opposite: they mean the same thing by this word if they agree in their use of it. The collective practice is what constitutes meaning (cf. PI, §43) and hence that what makes meaning and linguistic understanding possible. A consequence of this approach then is the impossibility of private languages, i.e. those for which no collective use is defined; but I shall not go into this here.

4. Critique of the Sceptical Solution

The reference to a linguistic community and the collective use of words does not solve the sceptical problem, but only transfers it from the individuals to the community. What is the "common use"? If it is a mode of use, then it determines the application of the predicate *F* also for new cases, i.e. for objects to which no member of *P* has so far attributed or denied the predicate *F*. In order to acquire this use we must be able as individuals to grasp it and to recognize how the word '*F*' is used in *P*. But then we can also understand a word in the sense of understanding a certain type of its use, and thus the fact of individual understanding, which the sceptical argument denies, must be accepted again. The result is not a sceptical, but rather a direct solution. As in the case of the individual use of a word, also in the case of the general use in *P*, one must furthermore distinguish the factual from the correct use, for only the latter determines the meaning of the word. How should the correct use be determined, if not by reference to a common understanding of the word in *P*? However, the common understanding is the understanding which most members of *P* share. So, this line of reasoning leads us again to the recognition of individual understanding.

While Wittgenstein recognizes, as we have seen, modes of an individual's use of words, Kripke doesn't. According to the latter, an individual's use of a word always consists in his past applications of it. In the step from the individual to collectives, use is suddenly understood in the sense of a mode of use. Wittgenstein and Kripke both formulate conditionals and speak about, "what the community would do in these new cases" (PI, §692; WR, pp.95 and 111). A consistent Kripkean sceptic should understand by the common use of a predicate *F* only its instances which have occurred so far.¹³ But these instances don't fix the application of *F* to a new object *a*. They are consistent with attributing *F* to *a*, as well as with denying *F* to *a*, i.e. with interpreting the instances which have obtained so far as applications of a Goodman-like counterpart of *F*. Before one can sensibly speak of a general application of *F* to a new object, it is necessary that sufficiently many members of *P* perform this application in mutual agreement. New *F*-statements are correct and meaningful only after they have been uttered by sufficiently many people. On closer inspection, however, there are no generally accepted instances of use either, as we have seen, because these would be ways of using a predicate in talking about a specific object.

Now Kripke does not hold a social-disposition theory of meaning (nor has he imputed one to Wittgenstein), because it would be confronted with the same objection he levelled in the individual case: one could then no longer distinguish between factual and correct uses of a predicate. But Kripke doesn't tell us how this distinction is to be reconstructed. Those requirements, the alleged unsatisfiability of which have served him in justifying the nonexistence of meaning in the individual case, are ignored in the collective case. What he now wants to emphasize is merely that the collective feels justified in correcting deviant applications of a predicate, and that such deviations are rare. From this it doesn't follow, he says, that the answer collectively given to an application problem is by definition correct; what follows is only the platitude that nobody feels justified in calling an application incorrect when almost everybody accepts it. This, then, is the meager remnant of the sceptical solution.

Thus, our result is this: Either one is a sceptic about individual modes of use of words, and simply denies that there is something like that, then one cannot speak of collective modes of use either, because the latter obviously are types of use in which the individuals agree. But, if only the instances of collective use exist, then we can also say in this case "Whatever is going to seem right to me is right. And that only means that here we can't talk about 'right'" (PI, §258). Or, one recognizes modes of use; then one can't accept these modes only for the collective—so to speak, as a "philosophical superlative". For, if I can know how the members of my community use a word, then I can also know how I

¹³ Cf. also Blackburn (1984, p.291–96).

myself, as one of them, use it now. I can grasp the rule and follow it. Thus, the sceptical solution either solves nothing or it abolishes the problem which was to be solved.¹⁴

In view of this modest result about the “most radical and original problem that philosophy has seen to date” (WR, p.60) , one can only comfort oneself with the words of Wittgenstein: “The results of philosophy are the uncovering of one or another piece of plain nonsense” (PI, §119).

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¹⁴ Similar remarks have been made by Hoffman (1985) and McGinn (1984).