Introduction

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Four decades ago, a book came out that was going to revolutionize the ways in which we think philosophically about meaning and, more generally, about intentionality, as well as the ways in which we think about the book's inspiration, namely, the later writings of Ludwig Wittgenstein. This book, Saul Kripke's *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (WRPL hereafter),[1] has caused, and continues to cause, almost as much ink to be spilt as its precursor, *Philosophical Investigations* (PI hereafter), did and continues to do. Indeed, interest in the latter was significantly revived with the publication of the former. The fortieth anniversary of Kripke's book is obviously a reason to celebrate it anew and to reflect on what it has accomplished. The purpose of this volume is to do just that. It is intended to demonstrate that many of the issues first raised by Kripke, both exegetical and philosophical, are alive and well, indeed, that, though they have evolved, they remain as unresolved as they were when Kripke first introduced them.

Kripke presented a highly original way of interpreting Wittgenstein's writings on meaning and rule-following and an utterly new skeptical problem, which he took to be embodied in the rule-following paradox Wittgenstein expresses in section 201 of PI: "this was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made to accord with the rule." Following Wittgenstein, Kripke developed the problem with a mathematical example, but it applies to all linguistic expressions. Briefly put, the problem is this. Suppose that I have so far computed only numbers that are smaller than 57, and suppose that I encounter a "bizarre" skeptic who questions my confidence that the answer to "68 + 57?" should be "125" rather than, say, "5." What makes me so sure, the skeptic asks, that in the past I used '+' to mean plus rather than quus, where quus is defined as a function that yields the sum for arguments less than 57, but yields the value 5

[1] The book first appeared in 1982, but an earlier version was published in Block (1981).

otherwise? After all, "in the past, I gave myself only a finite number of examples instantiating this function" (WRPL: 8), all of which are compatible with its being either function that I meant. Similarly, suppose that I encounter a skeptic who questions my confidence that I should apply the word 'table' to the table I see for the first time at the base of the Eiffel Tower. What makes me so sure, the skeptic asks, that in the past I used 'table' to mean table rather than tabair, where 'tabair' is defined as "anything that is a table not found at the base of the Eiffel Tower, or a chair found there?" After all, I presumably did not "think explicitly of the Eiffel Tower when I first 'grasped the concept of' a table, gave myself directions for what I meant by 'table'" (WRPL: 19). Kripke summarized the problem as a two-fold skeptical challenge: first, to give an account of the facts about an individual that constitute her meaning what she does by her expressions; second, to show how these facts justify her in applying the expressions in the way she does. He then argued that this twofold challenge cannot be met, leaving us with the skeptical conclusion that "there can be no such thing as meaning anything by any word" (WRPL: 55). Still, Kripke, allegedly following Wittgenstein, did not leave things at that. Accordingly, his next step was to give the skeptical problem a skeptical solution, on the model of Hume's skeptical solution to his own skeptical doubts about induction. The idea was to concede that the facts the skeptic is seeking could not be found – finding them would be to provide a "straight" solution to the problem – while maintaining that an alternative way of explaining our ascriptions of meaning to language users' utterances could be developed. The key was to replace the "picture of language" based on truth conditions with one based on assertibility conditions (WRPL: 74).

Though Kripke's book importantly contributed to making the remarks surrounding the expression of the paradox, which became known as "the rule-following considerations," the centerpiece of PI, the first wave of reactions to the book was, by and large, intensely antagonistic. For they were focused on Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein,[2] and this interpretation was almost unanimously rejected. In particular, most commentators thought that attributing to Wittgenstein a skeptical problem that needs to be solved was a gross misrepresentation of what Wittgenstein was doing. And, in so far as the paradox is uncontestably present in Wittgenstein's book, they maintained that Wittgenstein meant

[2] Kripke himself did not contend that his interpretation is accurate, nor did he endorse the views he developed. For these reasons, they are often attributed to "Kripke's Wittgenstein" or "Kripkenstein." I shall stick with "Kripke," simply referring to the author of the book.

to dissolve rather than solve it, that is, that he meant to show that it is based on a mistaken assumption, as his remarks immediately following the expression of the paradox, which they accused Kripke of neglecting, make explicit.

However, very soon, a second wave of reactions was to take over. Wittgenstein was relegated to the background, and philosophers concentrated on the problem Kripke had developed and on its solution. Whether or not it was Wittgenstein's problem, many thought that it was a problem that could not simply be dismissed. Two main foci of interest soon emerged from Kripke's twofold skeptical challenge. On the one hand, much effort was devoted to finding meaning-constituting facts that would satisfy the skeptic. In particular, much effort was devoted to trying to rescue dispositional facts, which, though largely ignored by Wittgenstein, were the main target of Kripke's skeptic. This is to say, more generally, that much effort was devoted to preserving a reductive, naturalistic account of meaning. Of course, those who pursued this task paid no attention to Kripke's own skeptical solution, as it is based on conceding that there are no meaning-constituting facts of the sort sought by the skeptic. On the other hand, much effort was devoted to clarifying the second part of the challenge and to determining the exact threat it poses to dispositionalism, which Kripke had taken to be defeated by it. For, intimately connected with the second part of the challenge, is the question whether meaning is essentially normative. And it was generally thought that a positive answer to this question could not be reconciled with a reductive account of meaning. Alongside these two broad themes, that of reductionism and that of normativity, there was also always the question whether Kripke had succeeded in ruling out the possibility, not just of a private language, but of a solitary one, as most took him to have attempted to do.

The contributions to the present volume could be regarded as part of a third wave of reactions to Kripke's book. This wave is more difficult to characterize than the first two, rough though my description of them might be, for the reactions have become increasingly richer, more varied, and more complex. But there are two elements that strike me as especially significant.

First, though reductionist responses to the skeptical problem continue to be offered, Kripke's book is more and more inspiring philosophers to do constructive work that is non-reductionist and which, therefore, though it does not attempt to give an account of the nature of meaning in terms that do not presuppose it, is still intended to illuminate it philosophically. Relatedly, more philosophers also attempt to shed new light on Kripke's skeptical solution, which was initially rather neglected.

Second, in their endeavor to address Kripke's skeptical problem, more and more philosophers return to Wittgenstein's writings to see if a solution could not be found there, whether or not they think that Kripke's problem was also Wittgenstein's. Indeed, some return to Wittgenstein to get clearer about Kripke's skeptical problem to begin with. Of course, some philosophers continue to argue that Kripke got Wittgenstein wrong in many respects. But even this is a positive stance, as it allows them to appreciate better both Kripke's and Wittgenstein's accomplishments.

All of the above themes are covered in the present volume, which starts with two strikingly different takes on Kripke's skeptical problem. Alexander Miller defends the standard interpretation of the skeptical argument, according to which the epistemological considerations invoked to reach the metaphysical conclusion that there are no meaning-constituting facts are a mere "dramatic device," not essential to reaching this conclusion. Miller defends this interpretation against Hannah Ginsborg's objections to it, as well as against her alternative interpretation, according to which the epistemological considerations constitute an indispensable "sub-argument in an overall argument to a metaphysical conclusion." Thus, he argues, contra Ginsborg, first that the answer the standard interpretation invites, that is, a non-reductionist answer, is not the "too easy" answer that she claims it to be. For, as he sees it, following Crispin Wright, this answer must accommodate "the intuitive first-person epistemology of meaning and intention," as well as "what Wright calls their 'disposition-like theoreticity'." Second, Miller argues, the standard interpretation does not make the argument depend on a "general and objectionable form of verificationism." Third, nothing distinctively philosophical is lost by reading the argument in a way that makes the skeptic dispensable. Miller further argues that the first of these objections applies to Ginsborg's own reading of the argument, and that the standard reading of the argument also better fits Kripke's text. Finally, according to Miller, Ginsborg's answer to her own version of the challenge, an answer which appeals to the notion of "primitive normativity," according to which the present use of an expression can be seen as conforming to a past use independently of what, if anything, was meant by the expression previously, does not succeed. Neither does it succeed in addressing the standard version of the challenge.

Hannah Ginsborg defends a reading of the skeptical problem that is different from the standard reading in three respects. According to the standard reading, first, the skeptical problem should be understood independently of Wittgenstein's remarks on meaning and rule-following. Second (as discussed in Miller's Chapter 1), the problem is fundamentally metaphysical rather than epistemological, arising from the difficulty

of providing the skeptic with meaning-constituting facts. Third, "the very first move in the skeptical dialectic," in which a skeptic challenges me to justify the answer I give in response to a mathematical problem, "is not essential to the argument." Against this reading, Ginsborg argues that the skeptical conclusion that there is no such thing as meaning follows from my inability to know, not what I previously meant by an expression, but that the answer I now give is the correct one, in that it conforms to my previous uses. To make her case, Ginsborg appeals to Wittgenstein's discussion of "knowing how to go on," which she takes to be the "inspiration for Kripke's skeptical argument." According to Wittgenstein, she argues, if I do not know that I should say "1002" after "1000" when being ordered "+2," then I do not understand '+2'. Similarly, she continues, the skeptic's first move is to challenge my confidence that my answer is "metalinguistically correct," that is, that I am using '+' correctly given how I used it, or intended to use it, in the past, that I am "going on correctly from previous uses of '+'." If I cannot meet the challenge, I do not understand the expression. And if I do not understand it, I do not mean anything by it. Thus, for Ginsborg, the source of the skeptical problem is essentially epistemological, making her reading "closer to Kripke's own intentions," and yielding a "stronger and more distinctive argument against the possibility of meaning." In particular, it does not face the often-heard objection that the argument rests on an "unargued reductionism." However, according to Ginsborg, I can know how to go on from my previous uses even though I have no knowledge of their meaning. If this is right, she concludes, the skeptic can be answered without providing an account of what meaning consists in.

Henry Jackman considers anew Kripke's criticism of the dispositionalist answer to the skeptic's challenge. He believes that, once properly understood, the answer can address Kripke's objections to dispositionalism. The key is to distinguish the initial "naïve" dispositionalist answer from the dispositionalist view Kripke has in mind. The naïve answer to the skeptic who challenges me to find a fact about me that entitles me to claim that I meant plus rather than quus by '+' in the past is simply that, even if I have never added the numbers I am now asked to add, had I been asked to add them, I would have responded with their sum, and not their quum, which entitles me to say that I did mean plus rather than quus. Kripke's mistake, according to Jackman, is to think of the dispositionalist theory as an atomistic use-based theory, according to which the meanings of particular words are tied to particular dispositions. This is in contrast with the naïve view, which should be seen as a holistic use-based theory, where meaning is understood in terms of, for example, the notion of radical interpretation (familiar from Donald Davidson and

David Lewis). So understood, the naïve view can address Kripke's objection that dispositionalism is incompatible with the fact that we can be disposed to make mistakes, as well as his objection that it cannot make room for the idea that our applications of words are justified, and even what Jackman takes to be Kripke's most serious objection, namely, that it ignores the fact that our dispositions are finite.

James Shaw is among those who do not think that Wittgenstein ever engaged with semantic skepticism. Yet, he thinks that an answer to the skeptic can be extracted from his writings by appealing to "notions of uniformity" such as "regularity, constancy, and (qualitative) sameness," which Wittgenstein employs when he addresses foundational semantic questions, which are, for Wittgenstein, metalinguistic questions such as "how do we use the word 'meaning'?." Focusing on the notion of regularity, which Shaw thinks has a "distinctive power" against Kripke's skeptical considerations, Shaw argues that, for Wittgenstein, "regularity of use is something that sometimes helps 'constitute' the presence of meanings." Thus, using the notion of regularity, we have a straightforward, "naïve" (obviously to be distinguished from Jackman's) reply to the metaphysical side of skepticism (Shaw is not concerned to address the normative side). In a nutshell, I meant addition rather than quaddition by '+' because "addition is the most regular and uniform continuation of the core, good applications" I and other calculators have made. Regularity is one of the factors that influence our meaning-ascriptions, how we use the term 'meaning'. Contra David Lewis, however, who proposed a similar answer, according to Shaw, Wittgenstein's notions of uniformity are just "ordinary, intuitive concepts," which, Shaw thinks, Kripke would approve of. Shaw considers several objections that might be thought to appear in Kripke's text, but he argues that they in fact have no force against the naïve reply, a reply, Shaw concludes, Kripke never considers. Importantly, Shaw stresses that "notions of uniformity plainly state non-semantic facts," as they should, according to Shaw, as "we are supposed to answer the skeptic with non-semantic facts to ground the semantic ones, lest we lapse into a form of semantic primitivism."

Marie McGinn reassesses Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein, in particular, of what Kripke takes to be the connection between Wittgenstein's naturalism and the paradox he expresses in section 201 of PI, and of the kind of naturalism Kripke ends up attributing to Wittgenstein. Kripke is right, she thinks, to emphasize what she calls the "methodological" component of Wittgenstein's naturalism, according to which attention must be paid to the circumstances in which ascriptions of meaning to language users' utterances are justified, and the mental states that may accompany their use of expressions are irrelevant to these

ascriptions. And Kripke is also right, she thinks, to emphasize what she calls the "ontological" component of Wittgenstein's naturalism, which gives a central place to the "natural history of human beings," in particular, their "agreement in ungrounded ways of acting" which is "sustained by nothing more than natural facts," and the ways in which their language use is woven into other human activities. According to McGinn, however, Kripke is wrong in maintaining that Wittgenstein's naturalism is involved in a skeptical solution to a skeptical problem, leaving no room for norms and being "inevitably" reductionist. Drawing on remarks Wittgenstein makes in *Philosophical Grammar* and *The Blue and Brown Books*, she argues, contra Kripke, that Wittgenstein's naturalism is not a response to the skepticism that may seem to arise from a mentalistic conception of meaning, where meanings, or interpretations, are regarded as intermediaries between signs and their applications. Rather, "a pressure towards the mentalistic conception" should be seen as arising within the naturalistic approach. The search for intermediaries that accompany our use of signs then leads to the paradox, but this in turn is overcome by Wittgenstein's appeal to naturalism, which should be understood as neither reductionist nor problematically quietist, as "no question about the nature of normativity that should be answered … remains unanswered."

Gary Ebbs focuses on the second part of the skeptical challenge, according to which, to put it in the terms of Kripke's that Ebbs focuses on, any putative candidate for a meaning-constituting fact "must, in some sense, show how I am justified in giving the answer '125' to '68 + 57'. The 'directions' [I previously gave myself], … that determine what I should do in each instance, must somehow be 'contained' in any candidate for the fact as to what I meant" (WRPL: 11). Ebbs offers an interpretation of this condition that differs from the more widespread interpretation, which construes the condition as implying that meaning is in some sense categorically normative. Ebbs's interpretation helps him to make sense of "Kripke's sketches of our ordinary view of meaning" and to explain why Kripke does not question or revise it despite its skeptical consequences. According to Ebbs, Kripke's condition is to be understood as the following requirement for being warranted in asserting a sentence. One is warranted in asserting a sentence only if the truth-conditions of this sentence are determined by the meanings of the words in it, which are in turn determined by facts that are conceptually prior to and independent of one's assertion of the sentence, and which constitute one's grasp of the truth-conditions of that sentence. This requirement, Ebbs argues, is what entails Kripke's criticisms of all the attempts to answer the skeptic he considers, in particular, his criticism of dispositional accounts of meaning, his criticism of the view that meaning something

by a term is a primitive mental state of a special kind, and his criticism of Wittgenstein's descriptions of our meaning-ascribing and rule-following practices. All these responses "fail to show that [Kripke's] requirement is satisfied." Ebbs ends with a Wittgensteinian critique of Kripke's requirement.

Daniel Whiting, too, focuses on the second part of the skeptical challenge, stressing Kripke's description of it as the "fundamental requirement" on a fact as to what I mean, namely, that it "*justify* my future actions, … make them *inevitable* if I wish to use words with the same meaning with which I used them before" (WRPL: 40). As I indicated earlier, this requirement is supposed to capture the normativity of meaning, the idea that the "relation of meaning and intention to future action is *normative*, not *descriptive*" (WRPL: 37). Whiting's goal is not to assess the claim that semantic skepticism follows from there being no fact that could satisfy this requirement. Nor is it even to defend the claim that meaning is normative. Rather, it is to get clear about what the normativity of meaning amounts to, so as to put us in a better position to evaluate the skeptical argument. Against some recent critics, viz., Alan Millar and Indrek Reiland, Whiting defends the "standard or orthodox" interpretation of the claim that meaning is normative: "If meaning is normative, it is normative in the sense that there are norms of truth governing the applications of expressions (in assertion) that hold in virtue of the meanings of those expressions." That is, norms of meaning are to be understood in terms of norms of truth. Whiting argues that recent attempts at replacing the orthodox interpretation are either "unmotivated" or not "genuine competitors." While doing this, he also makes clear that the orthodox interpretation leaves room for other norms governing the use of expressions, such as norms that concern the doxastic, epistemic, and motivational states of agents. But these norms should be viewed as "explanatorily posterior to the norm of truth."

The next three contributors examine the prospects for a non-reductionist account of meaning. Claudine Verheggen does this by revisiting Wittgenstein's PI in light of Kripke's WRPL. Though she thinks that Kripke's reading of what leads Wittgenstein to the rule-following paradox is faithful to Wittgenstein in many respects, she agrees, contra Kripke, with the most widespread interpretation of PI, according to which Wittgenstein dissolves the skeptical problem embodied in the paradox rather than providing it with a skeptical solution. However, Kripke's writings have suggested to her anew that Wittgenstein, though a non-reductionist, was not a quietist about meaning, that is, did not maintain that nothing philosophically constructive could be said about it. She, in fact, takes "the quietist and Kripke to have much in common."

For, though they both conceive of the skeptical challenge as a meta-semantical challenge, calling for a foundational account of meaning, they both end up with "purely semantic, descriptive remarks about meaning." Of course, the quietist and Kripke follow a different path to reach these remarks. The quietist argues that the skeptical challenge is fundamentally misguided, and hence rejects the skeptical problem and its ensuing skeptical conclusion. Kripke argues that the challenge is legitimate but cannot be met, hence the skeptical problem and conclusion. Verheggen then argues that, failing to share his diagnosis of the paradox with Wittgenstein, Kripke does not recognize that, once the skeptical problem is dissolved, a new meta-semantical challenge arises, which is connected to the essential link Wittgenstein emphasizes between meaning and use, and which is the problem of "reconciling this link with the claim that meaning is objective, and thus presumably, in some sense, independent of use." As a result, she further argues, Kripke does not see that the positive remarks Wittgenstein makes after dismissing the paradox are meant to do some constructive, not just descriptive, work, in response to the problem newly arisen. "In particular, he does not see that the notion of agreement plays an important meta-semantic role in Wittgenstein's remarks, rather than being a brute notion about which nothing can be said."

Olivia Sultanescu, too, advocates non-reductionism as a response to Kripke's skeptic, and she, too, thinks that non-reductionism does not preclude philosophically constructive work about meaning, contra some non-reductionists such as Paul Boghossian and Crispin Wright. Though, they argue, the proponent of non-reductionism can make sense of the idea that an agent has a particular rule in mind, she cannot make sense of the idea that the agent is *following* a rule. As Sultanescu sees it, the pessimism expressed here is in fact aligned with Kripke's diagnosis of the non-reductionist proposal, which, he says, "brushes … questions under the rug" (WRPL). However, she argues, if non-reductionism is understood properly, it is capable of meeting Kripke's challenge "in all its complexity." Sultanescu's first step is to get clear about why exactly Kripke thinks that the non-reductionist cannot meet the challenge. According to her, the central problem, as Kripke sees it, is that postulating sui generis "primitive" states of meaning leaves the nature of the states "mysterious." What many commentators do not recognize, she continues, is that the problem is not just about the "nature of meaning states" but also about the "nature of meaningful uses," that is, not just about the "internalization of the rule" but also about "its application in a new case." The problem is to reconcile the idea that, when I apply a rule, the application is somehow present in my

mind, since "internalizing the rule just is internalizing something that covers indefinitely many cases," with the idea that the relevant application is not yet present in my mind, as I have to apply the rule to a new particular case. In response, Sultanescu argues that the question of what it is to follow a rule in a certain way, what it is to come to apply an expression to a new case, can be answered by providing an inferential justification: "to work out one's response is simply to infer what the rule requires in a particular case and act accordingly." Sultanescu then considers Wright's objection to this "naïve" answer, an objection which concludes that "one cannot be said to be guided by rules – or, more generally, to be acting for reasons – in one's uses of basic expressions." The key element of her reply is that one is led to this conclusion by a conception of guidance that the non-reductionist need not accept. However, the whole range of theoretical options will become visible to the non-reductionist only if she ceases conceiving of herself as merely positing meaning states and allows that she can elucidate meaning by appealing to the notion of meaningful use, thus conducting her inquiry from "inside" meaning and understanding, and not from a point of view that presupposes neither. Then the non-reductionist can argue that "in basic cases, the justification for the application of a rule can only be given from 'inside' a commitment to that rule." Sultanescu ends by suggesting a foundational account of the determination of the contents of thoughts that shows how thoughts stand in internal relations, as they must if the naïve answer is right.

Anandi Hattiangadi defends a version of non-reductionism that she calls "semantic dualism." She acknowledges that her position goes against the conclusion of the skeptical argument. Yet, it is inspired by Kripke's WRPL (together with his *Naming and Necessity*), which, she argues, "contains the resources for a powerful argument against the physicalist thesis that meanings and contents exist but are in some sense 'nothing over and above' the physical," the thesis, that is, that "intentional facts supervene on the physical with metaphysical necessity," where supervenience is weakly understood as this: "for any metaphysically possible world, w, if w is a minimal physical duplicate of the actual world, a, then w is an intentional duplicate of a." As it targets supervenience, the argument is against both reductive and non-reductive forms of physicalism. And it turns on the metaphysical possibility of deviant worlds: "minimal physical duplicates of our world which differ from it in some semantic or intentional respects," thus worlds which contain either quadders, where quadders are minimal physical duplicates of us who mean quaddition rather than addition by '+', or zombies, where zombies are minimal physical duplicates of us who lack intentional