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Author(s): James C. Klagge

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AN UNEXPLORED CONCEPT IN WITTGENSTEIN

James C. Klagge

THERE are a half-dozen or so concepts used by Wittgenstein that are central to understanding his middle and later work—notions such as criteria and symptoms, form of life, language game, rule-following, and *Übersicht* (or “synopsis”). Each has received a thorough, though perhaps not definitive, examination, and a necessary, though occasionally excessive, emphasis. Here is another concept worth adding to the list.

In his middle and later writings Wittgenstein regularly considers what some fact or activity consists in [*darin besteht*]. He does this some 275 times in his writings published to date.¹ We have all kinds of reasons for being interested in this concept: It is central to Wittgenstein’s project of dethroning essences and demystifying the mental, it is closely bound up with the development of that other important Wittgensteinian concept of a criterion, and it foreshadows much contemporary work on non-reductive materialism. The last of these important ramifications of *darin bestehen* will be relegated to footnotes. Instead the focus will be on the more basic task of exploring its use by Wittgenstein.

It is, in one way, strange that the concept has been ignored, since it occurs as often as the well-worn term “criterion” (some 285 times), and it is just as interesting. But, on the other hand, its disregard is not so surprising, since the concept is expressed by a verb rather than by a substantive. Verbs rarely make it into indices,² and we do not tend to organize our thinking around verbs. But once one notices the concept, its widespread use and importance become apparent. What is necessary is an *Übersicht* of the concept. (The concept of “consisting in” is itself very important for Wittgenstein in gaining an *Übersicht* of other concepts.)

I

“Consists in” is properly used to indicate the constituents of a fact, event, quality, or activity. When one is concerned with the constituents of a thing or object, one speaks of what that thing consists of. In that sense, what one seeks are components.³ (Nevertheless, I will sometimes speak of what something consists in, where “something” indicates a range of facts or activities, and not things.) For example, a particular game, as a physical

thing, may consist of dice, a board, markers, and a rulebook, while playing that game, as an activity, consists in throwing the dice, moving around the board according to the rules, and so forth.⁴ Thus, what Wittgenstein seeks are constituents in the sense of a philosophical explication, not in the sense of a physical breakdown. When Wittgenstein considers what something consists in, he means this in one of two different senses:

1) Sometimes he means: what it involves or requires. Here he is indicating a crucial constituent that goes along with some others that remain unspecified. In this sense if x consists in y , then y is a necessary condition of x . This usage is not too common in Wittgenstein's writing, and when it occurs he is more often denying than asserting.⁵

2) Much more common and interesting is a usage according to which if x consists in y , then x amounts to nothing more than y , or is exhausted by y .⁶ This usage of the concept seems to have some ontological import. It is well-suited to express the "nothing but" intuition of materialists. When x consists in y in this sense, Wittgenstein sometimes expresses this by saying that y constitutes x (so "constitutes" is the converse of "consists in"), or that x is y .⁷

The nothing-but conception of "consists in" can in turn be used in two different senses:

a) When identity theorists claim that pain is (or, consists in) nothing but the firing of C-fibres, they are expressing what may be called the "strong" nothing-but conception of "consists in." This is generally known as reduction. The phenomenon in question, in this case (being in) pain, is co-extensive with and reducible to some other notion, viz. the firing of C-fibres. Wittgenstein often uses this strong sense of nothing-but "consists in," but almost always rejects claims involving it.⁸ The later Wittgenstein systematically opposes simplistic attempts at reduction—such as the view that language learning simply consists in giving names to objects (PI 26). But he is especially concerned to reject reduction when it invokes some alleged mental entity. For example, Wittgenstein rejects the idea that meaning is an experience (PI p. 181), and that thinking consists in having images (RFM p. 81).

Perhaps the single exception to Wittgenstein's animosity to reduction concerns meaning. Though he does not think that all meaning consists simply in (or, "is") use (PI 43), nevertheless, for certain kinds of symbols, such as syncategorematic symbols, he holds that their meaning lies in the technique of applying them (PI 557 [*liegt*]); and generally sameness of meaning between expressions consists in sameness of use (PI 20, line 43).⁹

However, if one goes on to insist that there is something common to meaning in general, to which it could be reduced, Wittgenstein will resist (Z 16):

. . . The mistake is to say that there is anything that meaning something consists in.

b) More commonly and centrally Wittgenstein is concerned with a weaker, non-reductive, sense of nothing-but “consists in,” which involves an essential relativization of the consideration of what x consists in to the circumstances of that particular occurrence of x . This sort of relativization to circumstances is familiar in the formal difference between $\exists\forall$ claims and $\forall\exists$ claims in predicate logic. Strong nothing-but claims that x consists in y are equivalent to the assertion that there is some description in terms of y that x consists in under any circumstances. That is how reductive claims are formalized. (For example, the identity theorist holds that there is some brain state that all cases of pain are realized by.) Weak nothing-but claims that x consists in y are equivalent to the assertion that for any given circumstance of x there is some description in terms of y that constitutes x . That is how non-reductive claims are formalized, and in contemporary jargon this is known as variable realizability. (For example, the non-reductive materialist holds that for any case of pain there is some brain state that realizes it.)

Wittgenstein asserts of a wide range of phenomena that they consist in different things in different particular circumstances.¹⁰ Some very clear examples of this are: following a musical phrase with understanding (C&V pp. 51 & 70); being guided by something (PI 170, 172, 177 [*liegt*], & 178); interpreting something in a certain way (RPP I 1=Z 208); inferring (RFM pp. 39-44); and changing one’s taste (BrB pp. 143-144).

From the fact that “consists in” often admits of variable realizability, we know that while some cases of, for example, interpreting a figure as an F will consist in saying “that’s supposed to be an F ,” others will not (RPP I 1). But will all cases of saying “that’s supposed to be an F ” constitute interpreting the figure as an F ? Obviously not, as Wittgenstein himself acknowledges (PG p. 139 & BrB pp. 144-46). Saying “that’s supposed to be an F ” constitutes interpreting it as an F only in certain circumstances (PG p. 140). The relationship of “consists in” is, we might say, a token-relationship, or a relationship between tokens or particulars, not between types of properties. This (token of) “interpreting the figure as an F ” may consist in this (token of) “saying that it’s supposed to be an F ,” but not just any such saying constitutes such an interpreting.¹¹

One might respond by insisting that in such a case the interpreting had not really consisted simply in the saying after all, but had only consisted in the saying-in-those-circumstances. Then it would presumably turn out to be true that such-a-saying-in-those-circumstances necessarily constitutes such an interpreting.¹² But that is not how Wittgenstein usually understands “consists in.” For some concepts, such as aesthetic appreciation, Wittgenstein confesses that they are so complex that to describe what

they consist in “we would have to describe the whole environment.”¹³ Generally, however, what a phenomenon consists in can be specified rather easily from case to case (e.g., LSD p. 308). The circumstances, which are certainly relevant, are presupposed by the specification and not themselves part of the specification (BrB p. 114).¹⁴

II

Wittgenstein’s focus on what things consist in is an important part of his campaign against essentialism about concepts. He has two main concerns:

1) The first is the Socratic prejudice, as he sees it, that concepts must have essences:

I cannot characterize my standpoint better than by saying that it is opposed to that which Socrates represents in the Platonic dialogues.¹⁵

To break the spell of this prejudice Wittgenstein asks what a concept consists in to make us try to articulate the assumed essence. His own occasional answers to these questions tend to be philosophically deflationary. Pressing the question is often more interesting to him than answering it. Socrates presses this question too, but he does so because he thinks we don’t know what we are talking about, and cannot know, unless we can produce an essence. (This is what Geach calls the Socratic Fallacy.) Wittgenstein, on the other hand, never doubts that we know what we are talking about. Where we go wrong is in accounting for (philosophizing about) what we know.

2) Wittgenstein’s further concern is that the Socratic prejudice has a dangerous consequence. We unreflectively apprehend that there is nothing obviously common to all instantiations of concepts referring to human endeavors, such as expecting, reading or training. So, driven by our prejudice, we postulate a hidden something in a sort of mental reservoir to satisfy the prejudice. Wittgenstein says (BrB p. 143):

There is a kind of general disease of thinking which always looks for (and finds) what would be called a mental state from which all our acts spring as from a reservoir.

For example, we postulate a spiritual activity (*geistige Tätigkeit*, PI 36 & 156), an experience that slips quickly by (PG p. 169) and is hard to get hold of (PI 436), or a peculiar feeling (BrB pp. 132-3 & 167). This ethereal something that plays the role of an essence turns out to be difficult to grasp (PG pp. 74-5) and takes on a life of its own as part of a mysterious and problematic realm. (The mysteriousness is not totally unlike that generated by Plato’s realm of the Forms wherein his essences reside.) By forcing us to look for and articulate these mysterious items, Wittgenstein is convinced we will see either that they do not exist, or that they do not, in any case, have the salient role that they had seemed to have (MLN pp. 104 & 107; BlB p. 42; & PI 578). Socrates and Plato really had no grounds (other

than a sort of *a priori* transcendental deduction) for their optimism about being able (ultimately) to articulate essences, but they remained optimistic nevertheless. Plato insisted that it would take decades of dialectic before one could really grasp the Forms, thereby insulating his view from testability.¹⁶

By pressing the question of what various human activities consist in, Wittgenstein hopes to demystify the mental—not by denying its existence, but by diagnosing and transcending our conception of it as an invisible reservoir. Instead of looking within the person, at the moment, for (the essence of) what constitutes, e.g., intending, expecting, or reading, we should concentrate on what leads up to, surrounds, and follows the experiences and movements with which we usually associate the activity. Therein lies the answer.¹⁷

III

Though Wittgenstein thinks the Socratic prejudice is most dangerous when it perverts our understanding of human activity and the mental, that is not his only target. In several cases, he ventures away from the mental to query what other things consist in.¹⁸ This section will focus on just one of them—the quality of goodness. Wittgenstein says very little about ethics in his middle and later writings, but there are more extensive comments in his lectures.¹⁹

Wittgenstein's campaign against the Socratic prejudice is best known in his discussion of games (PI 65-71). There is, he holds, nothing common to all instances of games that could constitute their essence. In lectures he draws an explicit parallel between games and goodness in this regard. Then he goes on to say:

The question in ethics, about the goodness of an action, and in aesthetics, about the beauty of a face, is whether the characteristics of the action, the lines and colors of the face, are . . . a symptom of goodness, or of beauty. Or do they constitute them?²⁰

It is clear from G.E. Moore's notes of these lectures that Wittgenstein means to reject the view that they are symptoms.²¹ This, however, leaves two alternatives still open. Either he accepts the view that they constitute goodness, or else he rejects the cognitivist presupposition that lies behind the dichotomy. These possibilities will be considered in turn.

The idea that the characteristics of an action or person constitute its goodness should, by now, seem like a very natural position for Wittgenstein to take. This general approach to goodness is confirmed in a number of places.²² Briefly: Goodness has no other property common to all its instances, so it would be a mistake to try to give it a single definition (though Wittgenstein refuses to call it indefinable).²³ Nevertheless it is useful to examine the variety of uses of the term. Goodness has a family of mean-

ings. If it is a single concept, it is so in virtue of the interrelationships or connections among its uses. We have reasons for calling things good, and these are some characteristic or characteristics of the thing called good. Goodness has all the earmarks of a family resemblance concept.²⁴

Goodness consists in the characteristics of the person or action that, as we say, make the person good.²⁵ It is nothing over and above, or behind, those characteristics. It is certainly not participation in some form of goodness, or beauty, as Plato would have it. Nor is it some non-natural quality. It is not caused by, or the cause of, those characteristics. (It would be the latter if the characteristics were symptoms.) St. Francis's goodness, for example, is (or, consists in) his being generous, sympathetic and truthful, while Socrates' goodness consists in his being wise and courageous.

If we accept Wittgenstein's claim that there needn't be anything common to all instances of some given concept, then we might well ask what justification there is for holding that the instances are all covered by that single concept. Wherein does the unity lie, if not in an essence?

The realm in which variable realizability has had its greatest contemporary interest is the philosophy of mind, where functionalists hold that, for example, pain may be one neural state in humans, while being quite a different one in, say, mollusks. In answer to the question why we should say that both species still, nevertheless, have pain, the answer is that what is common to the neural states is their role in the organisms' interactions with their environments. In both cases the state is, very roughly, caused by damage and causes defensive action. The Socratic prejudice reasserts itself, only at a different level of description.

In moral philosophy, those trapped by the essentialist prejudice might insist that, despite the apparent diversity of good (or beautiful) things, there must be something common to them—if not in them—namely a feeling of approval on the part of the one who ascribes the goodness or beauty. This is a standard non-descriptivist “move.” But Wittgenstein would question whether we do always approve of something when we call it good. He is reported by Bouwsma to have said:

What one can do is describe certain aspects of the uses of the word “good.” If you start out with “X is good” means “I approve of X”—well this is a common part of most uses of the word. But the use is infinitely complex. . . Even such phrases as: “I approve” or “Someone approves” might not always apply.²⁶

For Wittgenstein the key lies not in finding some more sophisticated way of satisfying the Socratic prejudice, but in thoroughly resisting it. In the *Investigations* Wittgenstein seems to be offering the notion of a family resemblance in the place of essence (PI 67). But it is important to see that a family resemblance is not supposed to be an explanation of the unity of a concept (a sort of hazy essence), but only a way of describing what unity there is to a concept—*viz.* there are many interconnections. Wittgenstein's

real point is that there is no deeper explanation of a sort that might correspond to an essence. Or, if one insists on pressing the question, it might be least misleading to say that the unity consists in the human tendency to group together the things that fall under the concept—i.e., to see them as going together (BrB pp. 129-130).

Since Wittgenstein's known remarks (from the middle and later period) about goodness extend over a period of some sixteen years, it is unlikely that they would all fit together in a neat way. Many of them, as we have seen, fit the family resemblance model, yet some others do not.

In the notes of Wittgenstein's lectures on aesthetics, given in 1938, Wittgenstein seems to reject the idea that goodness and beauty are qualities, focusing on the variety of ways in which the corresponding concepts are taught and used (L&C pp. 1-3). And in the notorious §304 of PI, Wittgenstein writes:

We have only rejected the grammar which tries to force itself on us here. The paradox disappears only if we make a radical break with the idea that language always functions in one way, always serves the same purpose: to convey thoughts—which may be about houses, pains, good and evil, or anything else you please.

He certainly is considering a non-descriptivist account of pain here, and he certainly is not considering a non-descriptivist account of houses. What about good and evil? One might well suppose he means to be grouping good and evil with pain, in contrast with houses, but the passage is inconclusive.

The temptation Wittgenstein feels, in the lectures on aesthetics, not to treat goodness and beauty as qualities, almost seems to stem from a presupposition that a quality must have an essence. However, if we reject this presupposition, as Wittgenstein should, we needn't succumb to the temptation. Qualities need not have an essence.

One might conjecture that Wittgenstein's views on goodness (and other things) underwent a transformation, from a constituent account to non-descriptivism, sometime after the 1936 lectures recorded by Rhees, and before the 1938 lectures on aesthetics. He was in Norway during this interval. (Indeed, the early sections of PI, through about 188, date from 1936 or before, while the rest of Part I of PI dates from the '40's.) But this conjecture still leaves us needing to account for RPP I 160, and the Bouwsma remarks, both dating from the late '40's. It is doubtful that any single account of Wittgenstein's views on ethics can be reconstructed from the evidence, if, indeed, Wittgenstein had even worked out a view. But he was clearly attracted by a constituent account of goodness.

IV

Though Wittgenstein campaigns against essentialism about concepts—the view that all concepts must have necessary and sufficient

conditions—he must acknowledge that some concepts have essences. Triangles are obviously three-sided plane figures. In that campaign Wittgenstein seemed especially to be bothered by hidden essences. But he himself holds, for instance, that the presence of a certain bacillus in the blood is the “defining criterion” of angina (BB p. 25). In this context the defining criterion is the essence of angina, and the presence of a bacillus in the blood would seem to be a hidden condition.²⁷

Presumably angina is importantly different in Wittgenstein’s mind from understanding or pain. This seems consistent with the idea that some terms of our language are technical terms, the definition of which we are willing to leave to science, while other terms are not.²⁸ Non-technical terms must receive an account that is accessible to ordinary users of the language under ordinary circumstances. Thus, non-technical terms will never have a hidden essence, and will generally not have an essence at all (as we saw in Sections I and II).²⁹ In this context we can see certain debates in the philosophy of mind as debates over whether various terms in our mental vocabulary can be treated as technical terms (type-identity theories) or should be replaced by technical terms (eliminative theories). Wittgenstein resists such treatments.³⁰

If Wittgenstein believes that a term has an essence, then he could give an account in terms of (what was called, in Section I) “strong nothing-but consists in.” Where Wittgenstein rejects essences he generally offers family resemblance as a better way of understanding the unity that resides in the concept. Here it would be more appropriate to offer a “weak nothing-but consists in” account. The latter account provides contextually sufficient conditions for the application of a concept, the former offers necessary and sufficient conditions.

At the climax of the rule-following argument in the *Philosophical Investigations* (§198), after denying interest in the causal antecedents of going by a sign-post, Wittgenstein affirms his interest in “what this going-by-the-sign really consists in [*worin. . . eigentlich besteht*].” He claims that one “goes by a sign-post only in so far as there exists a regular use of sign-posts, a custom.” And then he goes on (PI 199, & cf. RFM pp. 322-3) to infer the following restrictions:

It is not possible that there should have been only one occasion on which someone obeyed a rule. It is not possible that there should have been only one occasion on which a report was made, an order given or understood.

But what is the foundation of these impossibilities? If he is contemplating a weak nothing-but consists in account of rule-following, that will not generate the necessary conditions needed to ground these claims. He could ground the claims in a “strong nothing-but consists in” account of rule-following, but, as with understanding and meaning, it is transparent that he is committed to rejecting any such account.

The puzzle here is resolved by recalling that there was another use that Wittgenstein made of the term “consists in”—the first use mentioned above, according to which the account indicates something that is involved or required. “Consists in” can simply indicate a necessary condition, which is precisely what Wittgenstein is doing in these passages (& cf. OC 519).

There remains, however, a further complication in this usage. A necessary condition can be of two types (though the differences may sometimes be matters of degree): It can be a part or aspect, in the sense in which being a two-dimensional plane figure is a necessary part of being a triangle; or it can be a background condition, in the sense in which the presence of oxygen is necessary for lighting a match. Wittgenstein uses “consists in” in both of these senses,³¹ and either of them would ground the sort of impossibility claims that he made above. But it seems certain that in the rule-following passage he is using “consists in” to indicate a background condition (& cf. RFM pp. 322-3).

It should be clear that the necessary-condition usages of “consists in” do not preclude going on to offer a nothing-but “consists in” account of one type or the other of some concept (though the two nothing-but types do preclude one another). Consequently a family resemblance concept can have a necessary condition (i.e., common characteristic), but it will not be distinctive.

V

Deeper understanding of the consists-in relation can be gained by comparing it with the better-known criterial relation. The differences are instructive.

The role of criteria is fundamentally epistemological or semantical. Noting criteria is our way of telling that something is the case. The fact that criteria are satisfied licenses us to say that something is so, or to call it so-and-so. Criteria are no guarantee of knowledge, or refutation of skepticism. Rather, they are the public cues that we normally take for granted. Criteria get phenomena into the public arena.³²

The consists-in relation is fundamentally ontological, indicating what a phenomenon amounts to, or is. Spelling out constituents of a phenomenon may or may not be epistemologically useful—depending on whether the constituents are in the public arena, and whether the context, relative to which the constituents count as constituents of the phenomenon in question, can be identified.³³

In many cases the constituents are in the public arena. In these cases Wittgenstein seems to treat the constituents as though they are criteria.³⁴ Yet, in many other cases, Wittgenstein offers constituents that are not epistemologically helpful, because they are not in the public arena. Let us call these “non-apparent” constituents. Non-apparent constituents are of

three kinds: Some constituents are themselves psychological, such as intentions or feelings, while others are dispositional (or counter-factual). And the dispositional constituents are in turn either dispositions to psychological states, or dispositions to behave in certain ways (especially, what one would have said if asked).³⁵

The procedure of determining what a given phenomenon consists in is potentially an iterative process. If the constituents after the first stage are non-apparent, then we can ask what these constituents consist in (e.g., PI 578, B1B p. 32, & NFL p. 252). Wittgenstein makes the necessity for this sort of iteration quite clear where the constituents are dispositions (e.g., LPP p. 221/322, and LSD p. 316). If the iteration is continued long enough, we can sometimes expect to arrive at constituents in the public arena. But this is not an inevitable result, since Wittgenstein's purpose for constituents is not necessarily to produce something in the public arena. If we do have that purpose, we may switch to a search for criteria, as Wittgenstein sometimes does (e.g., PG pp. 48 & 81, and LW II pp. 9 & 12).

One way in which one might expect constituents to diverge from criteria would be for the criteria of psychological phenomena to be behavioral, while the constituents are neurological (as in, for example, human pain is the firing of C-fibres). But Wittgenstein vigorously rejects that path.³⁶

Another possibility is that there might be certain non-apparent phenomena that have no constituents.³⁷ In fact Wittgenstein never offers any constituents for experiential phenomena, such as sensations, feelings, or pains, to consist in. Indeed, he hardly even raises the question (but cf. NFL pp. 252 & 256). This is interesting since he is, by contrast, quite concerned to examine what intentional phenomena, such as intention, meaning, belief, and understanding, consist in. Apparently Wittgenstein senses an important difference between these kinds of psychological phenomena.³⁸ This difference is not apparent when one focuses on criteria, for Wittgenstein is just as concerned to require criteria for experiential phenomena as he is for intentional phenomena. Wittgenstein expresses the difference as follows (PG p. 80):

There isn't a further process hidden behind, which is the real understanding, accompanying and causing these manifestations in the way that toothache causes one to groan, hold one's cheek, pull faces, etc.

Wittgenstein dispels the idea of this further process by examining what the phenomenon of understanding really consists in.³⁹ He is not a behaviorist, or any kind of reductionist, about understanding because that would require "strong nothing-but consists in." But he does endorse "weak nothing-but consists in" (which is consistent with variable realizability), which may be called, for ease of reference, constitutivism. Concerning intentional phenomena Wittgenstein is a constitutivist, but not quite a behavioral or even physical constitutivist, since he is sometimes willing to invoke thoughts, feelings, and dispositions among the constituents.

Constitutivism, like reductionism, tends to sound deflationary about the phenomenon in question: There is nothing more to it than that. (Recall the “nothing-but” characterization common to both). Of course Wittgenstein does not want to be taken to be denying the existence of the phenomenon in question. He goes on to say (PG p. 80):

If I am now asked if I think that there’s no such thing as understanding but only manifestations of understanding, I must answer that this question is as senseless as the question whether there is a number three.

He only wishes to reject a certain way of thinking about intentional phenomena, as being something behind, or over-and-above, the constituents.⁴⁰ While that way of thinking has its naïve attraction, Wittgenstein’s rejection is at least plausible.⁴¹

Even more plausible is his constitutivism about goodness. Here he is not an ethical naturalist, since he is not a reductivist. There is almost no temptation to think of goodness as something behind, or over-and-above, the various good-making features of an action or situation.⁴²

But when we consider experiential phenomena, there is considerable temptation to think of pain, say, as something behind its manifestation. Wittgenstein certainly does not endorse dualism about experiential phenomena, but he is not a constitutivist either.⁴³ He is not concerned to reject our standard way of thinking about experiential phenomena.

Of course Wittgenstein is concerned to reject any way of thinking about experiential phenomena that makes them private. That is, they cannot be divorced from behavioral or public criteria (NFL p. 233, and, of course, PI 243-315). But it is quite clear that behavioral manifestations are not, do not constitute, the experiential phenomenon itself (e.g., LPP pp. 20-1 & 279; and RPP I 137). For experiential phenomena the issue of whether they require criteria (they do, except in first-person expressions, for which they have no criteria), or what the criteria are (behavioral), is quite a different issue from the issue of whether they consist in anything, or what they consist in.

This comparison of constitutives with criteria illustrates the important role of both in Wittgenstein’s thinking. The two are complementary, with neither being more fundamental than the other. It is, therefore, striking that criteria have received so much of the attention, and constitutives have received none of it.

This paper should serve as an effective redress of the imbalance, as well as an advertisement, not only for more work on Wittgenstein’s use of the concept of “consists in” and its implications for his attitudes towards the psychological and the moral, but for further work on the usefulness of that concept in the campaign against reductivism concerning a variety of issues in contemporary philosophy.⁴⁴

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

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NOTES

1. There are also some 130 occurrences of related terms such as “lies in” [*liegt in*], “constitutes,” “amounts to,” “makes,” “in virtue of,” and occasionally “is.” Occurrences of “consists in” and related terms are distributed quite evenly in the published writings between the so-called middle and later works (as are occurrences of the terms “criteria” and “symptoms”). Of course this statistical balance may still mask differences in emphasis or importance in the periods.

The following is a list of the published writings combed for this account. Abbreviations for textual references are given in parentheses: *Philosophical Remarks* (PR) (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975) [German edition: *Schriften 2: Philosophische Bemerkungen* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1964)], *Philosophical Grammar* (PG) (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974) [German Edition: *Schriften 4: Philosophische Grammatik* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1969)], *Blue and Brown Books* (BIB & BrB) (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, revised edition (RFM) (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1978) [German edition: *Schriften 6: Bemerkungen über die Grundlagen der Mathematik* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1974)], *Philosophical Investigations* (PI) (New York: Macmillan, 1968), *Zettel* (Z) (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1967), *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, volumes I & II (RPP I & RPP II) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, volume I (LW I) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), and volume II (LW II) (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992), *On Certainty* (OC) (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969), *Remarks on Colour* (RC) (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1977), and *Culture and Value* (C&V) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980). The following shorter works—“Remarks on Frazer’s ‘Golden Bough’” (GB), “Cause and Effect: Intuitive Awareness” (C&E), “Philosophy” (P), and “Notes for Lectures on ‘Private Experience’ and ‘Sense Data’” (NFL)—have all been reprinted, some in expanded editions, in Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Occasions: 1912-1951* (PO), ed. J. Klagge and A. Nordmann (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1993), to which page numbers refer. The text also draws on the following notes by students of lectures by Wittgenstein: D. Lee, ed., *Wittgenstein’s Lectures: Cambridge, 1930-1932* (LLN) (Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield, 1980); A. Ambrose, ed., *Wittgenstein’s Lectures: Cambridge, 1932-1935* (ALN) (Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield, 1979); G.E. Moore, “Wittgenstein’s Lectures: 1930-33” (MLN), in PO; R. Rhees, “The Language of Sense Data and Private Experience” (LSD) in PO; C. Barrett, ed., *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief* (L&C) (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972); C. Diamond, ed., *Wittgenstein’s Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics: Cambridge, 1939* (LFM) (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1976); and P. Geach, ed., *Wittgenstein’s Lectures on the Philosophy of Psychology: 1946-47* (LPP) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

2. A complete list of occurrences of *bestehen* and *liegen* and their cognates in PI can be found in *Concordance to Wittgenstein’s “Philosophische Untersuchungen plain”* (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1975), compiled by Hans Kaal and Alistair McKinnon.

3. See Fowler’s *Modern English Usage*, 2nd edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965) p. 107. A variety of senses of “consists of” are listed by Friedrich Waismann in *The Principles of Linguistic Philosophy* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1965) p. 189. In his early and early middle periods Wittgenstein was quite concerned with the notion of *bestehen aus*: what the world, a fact, an elementary proposition, or a complex consisted of. See, for example, *Tractatus* 2.023, 2.034, 2.1514, 4.221, 4.2211 & 5.55; and PR pp. 301-303.

4. See ALN p. 12. Some terms, such as “virtue,” “pain,” or “language” might seem to denote things or objects, and so (if seen that way) require the “consists of” construction in an analysis. But such a common sense construal of the terms might

be misleading, as Wittgenstein himself would be the first to emphasize. Nevertheless, Wittgenstein seems to follow this common sense construal of such terms when, at RPP II 153, he considers what fear, hope and pain might consist of [*besteht aus*]. Some subtle cases also arise at PG, pp. 112-13; and BrB, p. 100. The only place where Wittgenstein seems clearly to go wrong (in his English) is NFL, p. 222, where he considers what lying consists of.

Wittgenstein's translators have not always served him well on this score, sometimes rendering *besteht in* as "consists of": PR, p. 311; PG, pp. 68, 78, 79, 85, and 367; RPP II 34; and LW I 957.

5. For example, PI 3, 198, 265, 285, 449 (where Anscombe translates *darin besteht* as "involves") & 604; BIB p. 8; Z 686; and OC 344 & 519. At PG p. 94 Kenny translates *liegt in* as "is. . . part of." (Cf. also PI 242, roughly: "agreement in judgments is part of/belongs to [*zu. . . gehört*] communication in language.")

6. These uses are sometimes marked by intensifiers such as "simply" or "only." For example, LSD p. 308; GB p. 133 (=P p. 175 & cf. PI 122); PG pp. 68 & 72; BIB p. 43; BrB p. 139; PI 20, 26, 140 & 170; RFM p. 39; Z 16; OC 203; and many others, but these are clearest. See also a number of the occurrences of *liegt in*, for example, PI 20, 166, 177, 541, & 557; Z 7; RPP I 212; and BrB pp. 91-92 & 131. Sometimes it is difficult to tell in which sense (1 or 2) it is being used, as for example: P p. 183, RC III 112, and PI 197.

7. Some examples of "constitutes." Z 208; BIB pp. 32-33; BrB pp. 86, 99 & 145; RPP II 237 & 238; LW I 44; RFM p. 81; PG p. 79; PR p. 158; C&V p. 70; ALN p. 4; NFL p. 253; LSD pp. 308 & 349; and MLN pp. 51-52. (It is worth noting that "constitutes" can also serve as the converse of "consists of.") Some examples of "is": BIB pp. 15-16; BrB pp. 91 & 147; PG p. 139; RPP II 261; and C&V p. 70.

8. In addition to the examples cited in the text, see RPP I 120-21 & 220; PR p. 65; BrB pp. 132-133 & 172; PI 177 [*liegt*], 578 & 604; and C&V p. 51. In his early work, by contrast, Wittgenstein was committed to the idea that the picturing relation consisted in a sort of isomorphism between the picture and the thing pictured (e.g., *Tractatus* 2.14 & 3.14).

9. In the early thirties (i.e., the so-called middle period) Wittgenstein is not always so opposed to a reductive account of meaning. See, for example, ALN p. 4, and LLN p. 66.

10. In addition to the examples cited in the text, see PI 33, 37 & 642; PG pp. 85, 142, 166, & 213; and BrB pp. 85-86, 131, & 152.

11. Thus, the "consists in" relation, like token-identity, does not entail a supervenience relationship, which holds between sets of types of properties. In a larger investigation it would be useful to compare the "consists in" relation with the much-used but little-understood "realization" relation, and with Alvin Goldman's "by" relation (*A Theory of Human Action* [Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1970] pp. 20-1 & 38). For a start on such comparisons see Carl Ginet, *On Action* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990) Ch. 3.

12. Then we could treat the descriptions as referring to property types, rather than tokens. The "consists in" relation, construed in this way, would entail supervenience. It is common for advocates of supervenience to require a complete naturalistic description, which would presumably include the circumstances. (See, for example, Jaegwon Kim, "Concepts of Supervenience," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 45 [1984], p. 158.) Where Wittgenstein does seem to be implicitly endorsing supervenience (e.g., PG p. 175=Z 199), it involves reference to the full range of a thing's naturalistic properties.

13. L&C p. 7. Cf. also C&V p. 70; and LPP pp. 211 & 214. For cases such as these, the "consists in" relation would satisfy supervenience.

14. Cf. Anscombe's account of what it is for a certain kind of fact to be "brute" relative to another kind of fact, in "On Brute Facts," *Analysis*, vol. 18 (1958), pp.

69-72. Cf. also RFM p. 355, where Wittgenstein makes an analogous point about the difference between what is asserted in the sense of notational propositions, and what is presupposed by their assertion.

15. This passage comes from MS 110 (1930-31) p. 157 (quoted by Garth Hallett, *A Companion to Wittgenstein's "Philosophical Investigations"* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977] p. 771). For related comments on Socrates, see BIB pp. 19-20; PG p. 120; C&V p. 30; and especially Drury's recollection of Wittgenstein's comments in "Conversations with Wittgenstein," pp. 115-6 of *Recollections of Wittgenstein*, ed. R. Rhees, revised ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984). That Wittgenstein does wish to accommodate the notion of an essence in some sense is indicated by PI 371-3. See Section IV *infra*, for more on essences.

16. Cf. C&V p. 14; and also Waismann's Wittgensteinian portrayal of the mistaken Platonic accounts of beauty, knowledge, and justice (*The Principles of Linguistic Philosophy*, pp. 84-85 and 196-97).

17. For example, BrB p. 145; PI 20 [*liegen*], 541 [*lag*], & p. 177 [*macht*—makes]; Z 7, 14 & 93 [*liegt*]; PG pp. 72 & 147 [*heisst*—amounts to]; LW I 313 [*liegt*]; RPP I 315; RPP II 261 [*liegt*]; OC 601; and LFM pp. 93, 104, & 117.

When Wittgenstein claims (e.g., Z 16, quoted above, and RPP II 34) that thought or meaning might consist in nothing at all, it might be thought that he is claiming that certain statements might be "simply" or "barely" true, in the sense given to those phrases by Dummett. (See Michael Dummett, "Realism," in *Truth and Other Enigmas* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978] p. 148, for the former locution; and Dummett's "What is a Theory of Meaning? (II)," in *Truth and Meaning: Essays in Semantics*, [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976] ed. G. Evans & J. McDowell, p. 89, for the latter.) But I think he is better interpreted as claiming that they consist in nothing here and now common to all such cases. Rather, they consist in various things in various circumstances that often precede or follow the phenomenon in question. If one insists that they can only consist in something here and now that is common to all such cases (the Socratic prejudice with its dangerous consequence), it is better to say they consist in nothing at all. Thus, he rejects the idea that meaning and related notions might be narrow psychological states, in Putnam's sense (Hilary Putnam, "The Meaning of 'Meaning'," in *Mind, Language and Reality: Philosophical Papers*, vol. 2 [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975] p. 222).

18. For example, BrB p. 136 (similarity); PG p. 264 [*liegt*] (generality of a proposition); PR pp. 158 (infinite divisibility), 198 (generality of a proof), & 309 (infinity of time); and LFM pp. 93 & 104 [*lies in*] (experiment).

19. Especially the lectures delivered at Cambridge in Easter Term of 1933. They are recorded most extensively by Alice Ambrose in ALN pp. 32-36. Other passages in which Wittgenstein mentions "goodness" are cited below. The evidence is very sparse and scattered. Nevertheless the topic is sufficiently interesting to merit an attempt at an interpretation.

20. ALN p. 34. For an interesting parallel discussion of the relationship between sadness and facial expression, see LW I 767.

21. In G.E. Moore's notes of the same lectures (MLN p. 104), Moore indicates that Wittgenstein:

... went on to say that specific colours in a certain spatial arrangement are not merely 'symptoms' that what has them also possesses a quality which we call 'being beautiful'.

22. PG pp. 77 & 201; C&V p. 24; PI 77; RPP I 160; Bouwsma's notes of conversations with Wittgenstein in 1949, published as *Wittgenstein: Conversations, 1949-1951* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1986) pp. 40-42; and especially Rhees's notes of Wittgenstein's 1936 lectures: LSD pp. 366-7.

23. LSD p. 367 (and cf. RPP I 160). See also his refusal to call thinking indefinable at LPP p. 3/120/236 (page numbers separated by the slash indicate notes from different students pertaining to what appears to be the same point in Wittgenstein's lecture); and his refusal to call "following a rule" indefinable (RFM p. 321).

24. In MS 157a (probably written in 1934) pp. 25ff (cited by Baker and Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Understanding and Meaning*, vol. I, [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980] p. 391), Wittgenstein calls beauty a family resemblance concept. Recall the constant parallels Wittgenstein draws between ethics and aesthetics.

25. The "make" locution is used by Wittgenstein in this sense, though in other contexts, at LLN p. 31; LSD p. 325; LFM p. 93; BIB p. 32; PG pp. 102, 139, 280 & 327; PI p. 177; RPP I 262; and especially LW I 308-317.

26. *Wittgenstein: Conversations, 1949-1951*, p. 41. Consider R. M. Hare's desperation move of resorting to the "inverted commas" use of moral terminology when it is used without approval (*Language of Morals* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952] Ch. 11).

27. See Section V for a discussion of the relationship between criteria and "consists in."

28. Cf. Putnam's notion of the division of linguistic labor (e.g., "The Meaning of 'Meaning,'" p. 227). Wittgenstein accepts the general idea of a division of linguistic labor, but he would be willing to give very little "power" to specialists. E.g., Toulmin reports, presumably from a lecture: "...as Wittgenstein has remarked, 'what is or is not a cow is for the public to decide'" (*The Philosophy of Science: An Introduction* [London: Hutchison & Co., 1953] p. 51). For two discussions of this issue that Wittgenstein could perhaps accept, see section 2.7 of Toulmin's book, and Dummett's paper, "The Social Character of Meaning," in his *Truth and Other Enigmas*, p. 427.

29. It must be acknowledged that Wittgenstein does sometimes look for an essence [*Wesen*], e.g., PI 92 & cf. 371 and C&E p. 399, but it is not hidden, and it is not even necessary and sufficient conditions. For him an essence is an adequate explanation of a concept, which may be a family resemblance and weak nothing-but "consists in" account.

30. For a fuller discussion of this complicated issue see my paper "Wittgenstein and Neuroscience," *Synthese*, vol. 78 (1989).

31. He uses it in the part/aspect sense at PI 3, 265, 285, 449 & 604; OC 356; and Z 686. He uses it in the background condition sense at OC 344 & 519; C&E p. 395; and, I believe, PI 198.

32. This isn't always true. The few exceptions I have found involve public phenomena for which Wittgenstein offers phenomenalistic criteria for how I might know: BIB p. 51, RC III 98, and possibly the addition in the 2nd edition of Z to §367. These cases suggest the old positivistic problem that after being behaviorists about the mental, it is tempting, but circular, to be phenomenologists about the behavioral. Wittgenstein is not a behaviorist in the traditional sense, but we might say that he is a semantic behaviorist. He is only rarely tempted by semantic phenomenalism. (Cf. also LFM p. 182, where the possibility of a non-public criterion is mentioned.)

For a fuller, and non-traditional, account of Wittgenstein's understanding of criteria, see sections 1-4 of my paper "Wittgenstein and Neuroscience," *Synthese*, 1989.

33. The problem of identifying the context is raised for Wittgenstein by an unidentified student in LPP p. 75/311.

34. Clear examples of constituents that function as criteria are: BrB pp. 131-2 & 144; PI 164, 177 [*liegt*], 541-2 [*lag*], 644 [*lag*], p. 203b; Z 7 & 208 (=RPP I 1); LFM p. 182; RFM pp. 36, 39, 43 & 44; RPP II 42 & 506; and LW I 655 & 672.

Albritton claims this is the sense of criteria that is dominant in the middle (but not the later) period of Wittgenstein's work ("On Wittgenstein's Use of the Term 'Criterion'," *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 56 [1959], section 7). In my view, this convergence between constituents and criteria is not a stage in Wittgenstein's thinking about criteria, but rather a consequence of certain psychological phenomena, such as intentions and beliefs, having generally public and behavioral constituents. This convergence is just as common in the later work as it is in the middle work (as evidenced by the examples cited above—though many of these examples were not publicly accessible when Albritton was doing his research). On the other hand it must be admitted that there are a few passages in which Wittgenstein holds that the behavior that is criterial and seems constitutive of some intentional phenomena is mere evidence (and so not really constitutive, as I've been using that term): PI p. 211 (cf. LW I 708 & LW II pp. 17-18); C&V p. 70; and LPP pp. 20-21. These are all late passages, but they are not enough, in my opinion, to controvert the general convergence (both middle and late) between constituents and criteria of intentional phenomena. They constitute at most an ambivalence in Wittgenstein's account of criteria.

Criteria clearly do separate from the phenomena when the phenomena are experiential, for which there are no constituents (e.g., RPP I 137).

35. Examples of psychological constituents: BlB p. 32; PG pp. 141 & 177; PI 37 & 642; LW II p. 56; LLN p. 4; and LPP p. 301. Examples of dispositions to psychological states: PG p. 119; PI 144; and LW II p. 56. Examples of dispositions to behavior: PG pp. 371-2; PI 187 & 684; Z 674; LSD pp. 316 & 352; LFM p. 88; LPP pp. 59/183/298 & 61; RPP I 1134; RPP II 45; LW I 308 & 317; and LW II pp. 9, 12, 56 & 73.

When constituents are non-apparent then they will not be criterial (*contra* Malcolm Budd, *Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Psychology* [New York: Routledge, 1989] p. 140, who suggests that the disposition to respond can be criterial). But this occasional divergence between constituents and criteria is not due to any fluctuation in Wittgenstein's thinking about criteria, as Albritton seemed to suppose, but rather to an unchanging difference between what Wittgenstein is willing to count as a constituent and what he is willing to count as a criterion; and to the vagaries of what kind of phenomenon he happens to be considering.

36. Cf. LSD p. 316. While Wittgenstein's rejection of this path is clear, his reasons are puzzling and interesting. For an investigation of this problem, see sections 1-5 of my paper "Wittgenstein and Neuroscience," *Synthese*, 1989.

37. Wittgenstein says something like this at Z 16 & RPP II 34, but, as I explained above, in those cases I don't think he really means it.

38. I use the phrase "psychological phenomena" following Wittgenstein's own usage (LPP p. 91/221). "Experiential phenomena" is my phrase to refer to what Wittgenstein there calls "contents of consciousness," and "intentional phenomena" is my phrase to cover what he isolates as the "other" category of psychological phenomena that are not contents of consciousness. Cf. also his discussion at RPP I 836.

39. My reference to the "phenomenon of understanding" is supported by Wittgenstein's phrasing at PG p. 84 and Z 125. My reference to what it "really" consists in is supported by Wittgenstein's phrasing (*eigentlich*) at PI 198 & RFM pp. 39 & 44.

40. For Wittgenstein, if there is anything "behind" the manifestations of the intentional phenomena, it is the circumstances of the manifestation (PI 154 & BrB pp. 113 & 144). See also PI 305-7.

41. In section 8 of his discussion of criteria Albritton disagrees that the constitu-

ents/criteria of intentional phenomena *are* the phenomena (under particular circumstances), but he never says why he is unconvinced. (He doesn't address the question with regard to goodness.) Perhaps the objection stems from the different logic or grammar of the constituents as compared with the phenomena of which they are constituents. This difference is one that Wittgenstein was aware of (e.g., RPP I 1=Z 208; LW II p. 18; and PI p. 212e: Wittgenstein is inclined to think, for example, that "seeing as" consists in seeing something different, and not in interpreting, because interpreting is an action, but seeing is a state), but not always sensitive to. Wittgenstein's own qualms about this sort of issue are preserved by Anscombe in her "Note on the English Version of Wittgenstein's *Philosophische Untersuchungen*," *Mind*, vol. 62 (1953), p. 522. (At LLN p. 42, on the other hand, Wittgenstein was willing to take a potentially revisionist attitude toward the concept of "thought" to the extent that it differs from the concept of "expression.") When the constituents are non-apparent the difficulty is somewhat alleviated.

42. Plato would seem to be the clearest example of this way of thinking about goodness—as something over and above the combination of good-making features of the phenomena. G.E. Moore might seem to be another example, with his conception of goodness as a simple, non-natural quality. But, in fact, I think Moore would have been comfortable with Wittgenstein's constitutivist account of goodness, as long as it is not interpreted as saying anything about the meaning of the concept (as indeed it was not). Indeed, I think Moore had a constitutivist account of goodness all along. See Moore's retrospective discussion of his own views in "A Reply to My Critics," in *The Philosophy of G.E. Moore*, ed., P.A. Schilpp (LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1942) p. 588.

I conjecture that Wittgenstein was influenced in his thinking about goodness by Moore. Besides the philosophical similarity of their views, there is fair circumstantial evidence for such influence. Wittgenstein had read (at least part of) *Principia Ethica*, though he did not like it (see his letter to Russell in 1912 in *Letters to Russell, Keynes and Moore* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975] p. 9), yet he began his 1929 lecture on ethics by citing that work. When Wittgenstein was making remarks about goodness in his own lectures in 1933 it was at a time that he had been meeting with Moore privately and weekly for at least a year (see Alice Ambrose's "Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Portrait," in *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Philosophy and Language*, ed., Ambrose & Lazerowitz [London: George Allen & Unwin, 1972] p. 14). And Moore had just himself been preparing "Is Goodness a Quality?" which was presented to the July, 1932 joint meeting of the Aristotelian Society and the Mind Association (reprinted in Moore's *Philosophical Papers* [London: George Allen & Unwin, 1959] pp. 89-101).

If I am right that Moore influenced Wittgenstein here, then it is perhaps unique. Cf. G.H. von Wright's claim: ". . . I do not believe there is any trace of an influence of Moore's philosophy on Wittgenstein" ("Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Biographical Sketch," reprinted in von Wright's *Wittgenstein* [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982] p. 28).

43. The one case I have found where Wittgenstein seems close to offering constituents for an experiential phenomenon is RC III 112. But this does not seem to me to be a genuine exception. Wittgenstein suggests that being color-blind consists in not being able to engage in certain language games. But he does not make the inverse claim that being color-sighted consists in being able to engage in those language games. And even if he did make this inverse claim, we would have to be sure that he was using "consists in" in the nothing-but rather than the necessary-condition sense.

44. While working on this topic I have benefited from the encouragement of G.H. von Wright, and the example of Rogers Albritton's archeological approach to Wittgenstein. An earlier version of some parts of this paper was presented to the Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana, March, 1989. While revising this paper I have benefited from comments by Paul Boghossian, Malcolm Budd, Alfred Nordmann, Jim Peterman and Peter Winch.