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Grammatical Confusions and Linguistic Relativity:

An Anthropological Perspective.

I shall introduce myself briefly, as this is probably useful to understand why I am following this path.

For many years now my research has been articulating Wittgensteinian influences (I'm dealing with the second Wittgenstein mostly) and their practical applications, in anthropology and more recently in linguistic anthropology. If my reading of Wittgenstein influences my anthropological approach, the opposite is clearly true as well. Hence I can't read Wittgenstein but with practical issues in mind. This applies to epistemological issues as well as to wider ethical issues. A consequence of this practical orientation is that I am not focused on the exegesis of Wittgenstein's thought, nor on its genesis. But I've found that the confrontation of Wittgenstein's texts with authors pertaining to different traditions of research do bring new and interesting views on traditional Wittgensteinian questionings. Last but not least, I am therefore not a full-fledged Wittgensteinian. I may disagree with some of his Wittgenstein's views.

My current research is a project called "Semantics of Reason and Mind in Dalabon" (Dalabon being a threatened Aboriginal language of Northern Australia). The topic of this research (reason and mind) is clearly Wittgensteinian. And its methodology also connects significantly to Wittgensteinian issues: in exploring foreign language-games about reason and mind, one is exposed to new images of those items. The question of how to treat them arises naturally. I shall provide an example here.

In the language I'm studying, the word that designates thoughts, ideas, conveys an essential subjective connotation. This means that one cannot speak of "representations" outside of their being *someone's* representations. This puts an end to, or rather precludes from arising, any philosophical debate about the status of "ideas" as independent representations etc. It brings up a very different understanding of "the mental". In a Wittgensteinian spirit, I would say that such objectifications are a first step towards metaphysical beliefs and associated cramps. To that extent, we might be tempted to say that this language is wiser than ours in this semantic domain; we might be tempted to say that in this particular regard (at least), Dalabon is "wiser" than English, that it is less misguiding. But on the other hand, we live perfectly well with our language and language games for a start, and also, the concept of representation understood as eminently subjective does not fulfil all of our needs. Conceiving of representations as eminently subjective leads to placing objectivity outside the scope of human reason, into rules that are laid by ancestor beings. This, clearly, does not satisfy us as a description of objectivity. Hence there is little sense in barely saying that, for instance,

the features of semantics of, say, European languages, that allow for or encourage the separation of representation from the subject where them belong fall into the domain of grammatical illusions. My question in my approach to the language I am studying is: in which terms can we describe or discuss those cases, and against which background.

In the course of this methodological exploration I came to read Benjamin Lee Whorf, who is a "must" with these issues. I read him in a non polemical way – that is, not assimilating him to crude relativism for a start. This was to realise that Whorf and Wittgenstein actually raise very similar issues about images or metaphors used in and by our language-games – what, in the Wittgensteinian idiom, are called grammatical confusions. Their preoccupations are similar in a number of ways – seemingly reflecting each others in a chiasm. From a philosophical point of view, Wittgenstein's analyses are much more refined and are of great help to the linguistic anthropologist. But Whorf has linguistic proficiency on his side, and reaches interesting conclusions as well. Hence my hypothesis that a confrontation of Wittgenstein's and Whorf's views on the issue of "grammatical confusions" could teach us a few things about Wittgenstein. Writing this paper, I realised that the confrontation process was fairly long. Hence I have to apologize, for philosophical suggestions only arise towards the end of my paper, and even then, they seem fairly pale. I will start with shaping a concrete understanding of what Wittgenstein calls grammatical confusions, and shall then describe what Whorf calls cryptotypes, showing how these meet Wittgenstein's grammatical confusions. My next step will consist in shedding light on the differences between them, in order to build a comparison between the authors' respective patterns of demonstration. My overarching hypothesis is that Whorf's and Wittgenstein's respective criticisms of language reflect each others in a chiasm, to the point that Whorf could possibly be understood as Wittgenstein's "straight realist alter ego". From there, a confrontation of their respective theories may possibly teach us interesting things about realism. As I said, I won't be able to go as far as to reach conclusions about realism. My hope is that the path we will travel is not too boring and may echo interesting issues, as we go along. I also regret that I haven't been able to bring in actual anthropological cases (about the mental). May be next time…

In order to facilitate the comparison task, my readings of Wittgenstein and Whorf will focus respectively on the *Philosophical Investigations* and Whorf's article "Relation of Thought and Behavior to Language" (1939).

I Wittgenstein and grammatical misunderstandings

I will start with a simple question, to be understood in a non rhetorical way. If we want to remain practical so that we can actually apply Wittgenstein's imprecations in our own life and research, we need to understand

very precisely when language may entail confusions: where, when, why, how, do grammatical confusions occur? Does Wittgenstein provide us with concrete examples of grammatical confusions?

Yes, reading Wittgenstein, one can build a reasonably clear idea of what grammatical confusions are concretely, even though we are of course facing a cluster of meanings rather than one definition.

The *Philosophical Investigations* are a good volume for one to look for descriptions and examples of grammatical confusions. Indeed, they are omnipresent. As we know, this work is an attempt to clear up a major confusion that can be called grammatical for several reasons: for a start it is a misguided view of language. From section §90, Wittgenstein's remarks make their target more explicit, and it becomes clear that the origin of this confusion about language is linked to *our* very use and understanding of language (that is, it is not due to language itself):

§93 […] A *misunderstanding* makes it look to us as if a proposition *did* something queer.

§94 […] For our forms of expression prevent us in all sorts of ways from seeing that nothing out of the ordinary is involved, by sending us in pursuit of chimeras.

Just a few paragraphs later, these confusions are labelled "grammatical":

§110 "Language (or thought) is something unique" – this proves to be a superstition (*not* a mistake!), itself produced by grammatical illusions.

The remarks and their organisation in that section of the *Philosophical Investigations* provide a fairly clear pattern of what so-called "grammatical confusions" may be. They may in fact be better named *philosophical* confusions, for the actual confusions do not bear on grammar itself: the problem *is* actually philosophy, or rather metaphysics. It is the *origin* of the confusion that is linked to grammar – not the confusions themselves. Here again, the confusion is not a confusion *of* or *in* grammar, in the sense that grammar in itself is, on the contrary, what shows us the way. The confusion is *about* grammar, that is, *we* are getting confused about grammar. *We* misunderstand language, *we* fail to see clearly how its grammar works. Hence we could possibly make the idea of grammatical confusions more explicit by using two different expressions. We could distinguish between misunderstandings about grammar (the initial misunderstandings) and philosophical confusions which are also called superstitions. The set of metaphysical confusions, superstitions, *results* from the initial grammatical misunderstanding, the latter being the source – maybe the cause – of the former. Hence I will now be using the expressions "philosophical superstitions" or "metaphysical superstitions" on the one hand, and "grammatical misunderstandings" on the other hand.

The major philosophical superstition (as per §110) is a mistaken understanding of language that, in the landscape of Wittgenstein's interlocutors, gets assimilated to Frege's position. More specific ones are for

instance misunderstandings about the grammar of the verb "to know", about third and first person statements (leading to superstitions about the "mental"), etc.

As it is often the case with Wittgenstein's concepts, grammar is ambivalent. The author makes miscellaneous remarks about grammar itself, a concept that could be described in a blanket fashion as the "rules that organize our language-games as they show themselves in our very language-games" (the rules here are not to be understood as a "backstage" reality; they appear at the very surface of our language-games). Grammar is ambivalent because, on the one hand, it can be the basis of misunderstandings that generate philosophical superstitions; but on the other hand, grammar is the model we need to scrutinize to clear those very misunderstandings. This is not in itself a paradox. On the contrary, it is only natural that one has to carefully observe something to avoid any misunderstanding about it. Hence the ambivalence of grammar is not an ambiguity. However, this ambivalence should not be overlooked.

Grammar is apparent in our language-games, and this is why we need to scrutinize these language-games and describe them clearly, in order to get rid of our philosophical superstitions. But if this is so, how comes we do misunderstand grammar at all? Where and how does misunderstanding arise?

Scattered all along the *Philosophical Investigations*, we find several sorts of remarks about grammar. Many ot those remarks are mere considerations about how the grammar of this or that word is structured.

§150 The grammar of the word "know" is evidently closely related to that of "can", "is able to". But also closely related to that of "understand" ("mastery" of a technique").

There are many other purely descriptive remarks. These match the idea that we need to observe the grammar in our language-games and that this activity will prevent us from developing philosophical superstitions.

But at other times, Wittgenstein seems to get out of his descriptive stance to warn us against the fact that such or such expression may be misguiding, may be the basis of an easy misunderstanding: this is the case of the expression "sum in the head" for instance, mentioned in §366, and said to be misleading, leading us to believe that the calculus is actually happening in our head, that it is a mental event. With these remarks, pointing at those aspects of our language that are likely to create misunderstanding, language-games and their grammar seem to endorse a more dubious character. We are still responsible for misunderstandings: *we* are the ones that misunderstand grammar. Grammar does nothing at all. However, warning us about the fact that some specific language-games can actually be more "slippery" than others, Wittgenstein is by the same token saying that language-games themselves are more or less transparent – that is, more or less opaque; more or less misleading. Language-games can, at the end of the day, be misleading. Misunderstandings about grammar arise where our language-games (the expression of grammar) get confusing.

How can language-games be confusing? Which aspects of grammar can be more or less transparent or opaque? Through the *Philosophical Investigations*, I have identified three characters which seem, according to Wittgenstein, to make language-games and their grammar more confusing. (I do not claim that this list is exhaustive, these aspects are those which I found salient.) One aspect is linked to our using language in an "abnormal" way. The other two seem to be linked to properties of language itself.

a) *Language on holidays*

The most famous reason for language to pave the way for misunderstanding is when it "goes on holidays", when "the language-game in which [words] are to be applied is missing" (§96). This happens when we philosophize. In that case, philosophy – our tendency to philosophize –, not language, seems to be held responsible for its own roving. Grammar is absolved, but this raises two interwoven problems. I won't explore them here but I will mention them, and we will meet them again, indirectly, towards the end of my paper.

a) The misunderstanding about grammar that was supposed to bring philosophical superstitions about is thus supposed to be rooted in the very occurrence of our metaphysical language-games themselves. This is circular. What is the source of our philosophical language-games? Are they spontaneous? Ultimately, this question bears on anthropology (rather than on psychology, I'd say).

b) Language seems to be ascribed to some particular types of use, which are clearly defined as the "original" language-games, those that a child learns when he learns language, those which are the "home" of grammar (§116). Isn't it too restrictive?

The problems are interwoven, for if philosophical language-games are spontaneous, how do we justify their exclusion from the set of those "original" and "natural" language-games"?

By shifting the responsibility on our using language "in the wrong way", this explanation absolves language and its grammar.

b) *Pictures in language*

But the two remaining aspects that make our language misleading are clearly linked to language itself. The first aspect is linked to the seducing power of language and of its expressions. This seducing power is associated with the suggestive power of pictures.

§112 A comparison [a picture, an image] that has been absorbed into the forms of our language produces a false appearance, and this disquiets us. "But *this* isn't how it is!" – we say. "Yet *this* is how it has to *be*!".

§115 A picture held us captive. And we could not get outside of it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably.

§191 It is just that this expression suggests itself to you. As the result of the crossing of different pictures.

In these cases we are merely bewitched by some specific forms of our language itself. The pictures that seduce us may as well be the product of some metaphysical thoughts, but Wittgenstein clearly states that they have been "absorbed into the forms of our language". The ambivalence of grammar becomes more tangible. We can still trust our language-games to the extent that a careful hindsight would dissolve misunderstanding. Nonetheless, our language, in its current condition, may not always show us the right way at first sight. It is, in some respect, misguiding, deceptive. Shall we, following Whorf, make the hypothesis that metaphysical superstitions have deposited into our language so that some of our language-games make those beliefs sound even more natural? Wittgenstein seems to make his such an anthropological view in his *Remarks on Fraser's Golden Bough* for instance, as he indicates that our uses of the words "ghost", "shade" or "spirits" are the signs of a mythology deposited in our language. We could thus formulate the hypothesis further, saying that our language is thus deceptive for anthropological and historical reasons. Different language-games, in different forms of life, may be less deceptive (this, again, is an avatar of Whorf's hypothesis). As a counterpart to this hypothesis, one would need to clarify, again, the question of "the origins" and the risk of assigning them to "purity".

c)   Analogies in different regions of grammar

The third aspect that makes our language-games misleading is a structural consideration that clearly echoes the linguistic analyses provided by Whorf. It is about misleading analogies that make us project the grammar of a certain word or language-game onto the grammar of another word or language-game. Thus we misunderstand the latter because we apply grammatical patterns that are not adequate to it. Here grammar itself may be deemed misleading.

§90 […] Our investigation is therefore a grammatical one. Such an investigation sheds light on our problem by clearing misunderstandings away. Misunderstandings concerning the use of words, caused, among other things, by certain analogies between the forms of expression in different regions of language […].

In some cases, *we* operate the analogy: it is barely a mistaken analogy, and it is *our* mistake:

§78 Compare *knowing* and *saying*.
How many feet high Mont Blanc is –
How the word "game" is used –
How a clarinet sounds –
If you are surprised that one can know something and not be able to say it, you are perhaps thinking of a case like the third.

But there are further cases where language-games, or even just the structure of our language, are actually providing the basis of a misleading analogy:

§36 And we do here what we do in a host of similar cases: because we cannot specify any *one* bodily action which we call pointing to the shape, (as opposed, for example, to the colour), we say that a *spiritual* [mental, intellectual] activity corresponds to these words.

Where our language suggests a body and there is none: there, we should like to say, there is a spirit.

It is clearly our language that suggests a body, and it does so by using a verb (to point) that is primarily used for body gestures to describe an action that is not only a body gesture.

My conclusion here is that, although grammar, shown in language-games, is what we have to look at to get rid of metaphysical superstitions, it is at the same time crucially ambivalent: it also carries the very possibility of these superstitions, which are even said to have "deposited in our language". If our philosophical investigations are informed by an anthropological perspective, this ambivalence of grammar may radically change the status of what Wittgenstein calls metaphysical superstition. This announces Whorf's understanding of metaphysical beliefs.

II Whorf's grammatical metaphors

I shall first clear out the issue of Whorf's "status" within the philosophical landscape, and see why his texts should not be read with "relativism in the background".

Whorf is firstly a linguist. Among linguists, Whorf is mainly associated with the linguistic relativity hypothesis, also know as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which attracts poor reputation among philosophers. In its weaker and more realistic version, which we will consider here, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is simply the idea that the particular shapes of human languages influence human thoughts (even at the very basic level of the individual thoughts) and cultures (culture being understood here as a particular set practises, productions, institutions, reminding us of forms of life). This conclusion can be understood pragmatically as a remark on language and daily lifestyle. It does not necessarily take us to postulate that speakers of different languages live in different worlds, since it does not preclude translation between languages.

But one of the historical premises of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis entails a strong relativist conclusion. Historically, the Sapir and Whorf hypothesis leaned against the American anthropologist Franz Boas's hypothesis. This premise states that language shapes our experience, that is, language and its divisions and categories are the instruments that help us cut out and organize an initially shapeless substratum. This very division between unshaped substratum/conceptual scheme (language or other) has long been criticized by philosophers as the very original source for relativism and scepticism (see Davidson, 1974, "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Schema") for a) we quickly loose any contact at all with the unknowable substratum and b) then different language groups can be understood as living in different and altogether incommensurable worlds. This last statement is the main reason why the so-called "linguistic relativity hypothesis" carries a bad reputation among philosophers.

But Whorf did not embrace the relativist conclusion following from Boas' hypothesis.

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis and the radical relativist conclusion share the same premise, which is a (naïve) "realistic" claim about the "real" substratum of our experience. Nothing in Whorf's theory prevents us radically from translation – although it may sometimes require extra commentary. And we must bear in mind that Whorf is a linguist and not a philosopher. For that reason also, he never came to elicit a conclusion from the premise to the radical relativist consequence. As for himself, he was deeply and explicitly committed to realism – although a "naïve" realism – in the sense that his interpretations constantly refer, as we shall see, to "what things are really like". This is highly questionable from a philosophical point of view, but I think it is a mistake to read Whorf's linguistic theories in the light of philosophical relativism, forgetting that most of his enterprise was about translating.

Let's see how Whorf's views can interact with Wittgenstein's.

A crucial point in Whorf's writings consists in the analysis of language in terms of overt and covert categories, phenotype and cryptotype, as described in articles and letters written from 1936 and published in *Language, Thought and Reality, Selected Writings*, 1956 – three years after the first publication of the *Philosophical Investigations*. To make it brief, an overt category, or phenotype, is a linguistic category that is clearly and (virtually) systematically marked in sentences. The English noun-plural is an example of such a category: it is marked by "s", "es", or a few irregular forms. A covert category, or cryptotype, is a linguistic category that is not marked in most of its use, but only in a few occasions. The English class of intransitive verbs is an example of a covert category. These verbs are mostly used as other verbs, without any specific marking, but they share some distinctive features, which in this case are privative features: for instance, they cannot be used in the passive form. Eg: sleep; "be slept" is not grammatical and has no straight forward meaning. The revealing occurrence (which can be a non-occurrence, an impossibility) is called the reactance. Another example of cryptotype is, for instance, what Whorf calls the verbs of "copulative resolution" such as "be", "stay", remain". The reactance of this cryptotype is that they lack the passive forms but can be followed by nouns (you can "remain an idiot" for instance). This example already echoes Wittgenstein.

In "Discussion of Hopi Linguistics" (1937), Whorf provides the following definition: "Such an elusive, hidden but functionally important meaning I call a cryptotype". ("Meaning" stands here as a technical term of linguistics: it is the semantic effect obtained by an assemblage of linguistic features.) Whorf then argues that speakers experience a "dimly felt relation" between the terms that belong to a common cryptotype or covert class, and that this "dimly felt relation" itself adds to the semantic value, or meaning (or sense), of the term. In "Thinking in Primitive Communities" (around 1936), Whorf states that cryptotypes are susceptible to express more "rational" meanings than phenotypes (subverted by language determinism), but on the other hand the semantic value they convey can also be "more or less duplicated in a word and lexical concept by a philosopher". From then, as we will see in more details, cryptotypes connect to metaphysical beliefs, because, as hidden grammatical resemblances, they are a source of metaphysical inspiration.

Putting it in Wittgenstein's terms, I understand Whorf as saying that some of the rules of our grammar do appear clearly within the forms of our language – in the sentences we actually *use* – while some are actually semi-hidden, showing themselves only in the reactance situations, which can easily be overlooked by non-linguists and built into metaphysical beliefs. These semi-hidden patterns are clusters of formal analogies inside of which we tend to unreflectively apply inappropriate patterns. I contend that there is a clear parallel between Whorf's overt/covert, cryptotype/phenotype distinction and Wittgenstein's view that there are misguiding "analogies between the forms of expression in different regions of language" (*Philosophical Investigations* §90).

I shall give an example which outlines the similarities between Whorf's and Wittgenstein's respective descriptions of the phenomenon and between the kinds of issues they are concerned with.

In his "Relation of Thought and Behavior to Language" (1939), Whorf describes a few "fashions of speaking", and the genre of "thoughts" entailed by the underlying cryptotypes they contain. Many of these "fashions of speaking" and the beliefs they entail are of the same genre as the metaphysical illusions denounced by Wittgenstein. A striking convergence is Whorf's analysis of the link between the dualistic distinction form/matter and some linguistic structures in English. Whorf starts with the identification of a cryptotype, the mass-noun, which can be isolated from the general phenotype of nouns because, for instance, mass-nouns generally lack the plural form and can take partitive article (you can't say "oxygens" but "some oxygen"). As opposed to other nouns that refer to objects such as trees, tables, houses etc., the referents of mass-nouns do not show defined boundaries. Whorf then outlines the linguistic device that consists in connecting these mass-nouns to containers with the connector "of": a bottle of water, a glass of wine. Then he shows how we apply the container/content formula to the rest of the mass-nouns cryptotype: a stick of wood, a clump of butter, a piece of meat, etc. Comparing English to Hopi, which is said to have no mass-nouns, Whorf emphasizes that we could as well consider a clump of butter or a cup of coffee as objects for themselves (which we actually do sometimes, as for a brick, for instance, or a stone). But English generalises the container/form, "bottle of water" treatment to most mass-nouns, to most of the items of the mass-noun cryptotype. Whorf's interpretation links this generalized treatment to our generalized understanding of our environment under the dualistic form/matter paradigm, which, he says, is also a "naïve idea", "instantly acceptable, 'common sense'". I don't find it very clear which way the "influence" applies: language may influence our "common sense naïve beliefs" as well as these beliefs may influence our fashions of speaking. At the end of the day, they seem to feed each others. The part played by cryptotypes is also ambivalent. At one stage there is a projection of the model of "objects with clear boundaries" on the unidentified mass-noun cryptotype. At a second stage there is an extension of a form of expression, the "container + of" expression, to numerous members of a cryptotype. The cryptotype effect may thus vary. But in any case, according to

Whorf, the source of the problem is that average speakers do not identify the mass-noun cryptotype and that this opens the door for projections and assimilations of things that are different in nature.

As I said, I find the convergence between Whorf and Wittgenstein striking here. Dualism, if not in its form/matter occurrence, at least in its body/mind occurrence, is listed among metaphysical superstitions targeted by Wittgenstein. And Whorf locates the node of the connection between the structure of language and speech and our dualistic interpretation of the world in analogies and projections we make spontaneously between or upon members of a cryptotype, that is, analogies between words grouped under a class by the structure of language (grammar) that speakers do not necessarily identify spontaneously as a class. Again, we do not stand very far from those "misunderstandings concerning the use of words, caused, among other things, by certain analogies between the forms of expression in different regions of language" (§90), the target of Wittgenstein's treatment. In both cases, there are semi-hidden resemblances, taking us to misguiding assimilations or projections, and then to a certain posture. In both cases, taking a closer look at how language works and how it is used will clear that out in some way. Wittgenstein says that language seduces us; Whorf says that language "influences our thought".

Even more striking maybe: Whorf's shedding light on the recurrence of the space metaphor in English. He argues that, because we keep applying terms that belong to the description of space ("long", "large") to all sorts of contexts, we actually objectify many dimensions such as time, sounds and produce imaginary spaces on the basis of the properties of our visual space. He states that we even apply this to thoughts, using expressions such as "grasping the thread" of an argument, saying that my attention "wanders" and so on. What Whorf calls "metaphors" can be understood as playing a comparable role as what Wittgenstein calls pictures, comparisons, images" (§112). And Whorf's metaphors operate in a domain extensively explored by Wittgenstein. The 36th remark of the *Investigations*, about "pointing to the shape", echoes Whorf's analysis very clearly.

Last but not least, interestingly, Whorf's linguistic analyses eventually take him to comment on, and criticize, the conception of language underlying modern logic. Some paragraphs of his 1941 "Language and logic" actually sound quite Wittgensteinian although there are also crucial discrepancies.

III Confrontation

I thus contend that Wittgenstein and Whorf unveil very similar mechanisms of language grammar and use, and that they are both interpreting them as connected to a host of metaphysical beliefs. My hypothesis here will be that they are actually talking about the same phenomena, describing the very same properties of our

language and its grammar and the very same sort of mechanisms happening within our language-games. Their "talking about the same thing" will thus be the background against which I will try and analyse what's different about their views, in order to sketch the chiasm produced with the comparison of their respective positions. Interestingly enough, Wittgenstein and Whorf were both trained engineers, and both had an ambivalent relationship to the "academic" world. On the other hand, the differences – in style, tools, purposes, intellectual backgrounds… – are striking. I will present what I consider to be the main areas of discrepancy, grouping items within three clusters. As we go along, you can find the differences outlined in the table here.

a) Different purposes

Whorf and Wittgenstein do not tackle the same problems.

Wittgenstein's work initiate in a criticism of Frege's and Russell's views on logic and language that takes him to re-evaluate the very nature of our language as a major element in our form of life (line "prompted by" in the table). Hence Wittgenstein's favoured issues range from language, thought, mind (line "primary application" in the table), to understanding, rationality (rules), perception – this second set being an offspring of the former bundle of questions. Wittgenstein's ethical stance has to do with getting rid of an illusion we entertain about language and the world.

Whorf's texts have to be understood within the history of human sciences, rising at a time when a few anthropologists started to explicitly fight the idea that non-Western cultural groups, then called "primitives", were not to be considered "backwards" in term of their intellectual development. Interestingly, this is an idea Wittgenstein explicitly argues against as well in his remarks on Fraser. But it is clearly more central in Whorf's work than in Wittgenstein's: it is Whorf's ethical stance. The scientific status of a culture being understood as the first criteria of evolution, the issues Whorf firstly tackles are linked to physics: space, time, form/matter distinction. He appeals to psychology, but mainly as a tool to interpret cryptotypes. We have mentioned his views on modern logic: but again, they are mainly a side effect.

All in all, what is crucial for one appears as a secondary preoccupation for the other, and vice versa.

b) Different premises and tools

As mentioned earlier, Whorf's theory rely heavily on the idea of an underlying "reality", understood as the substratum of experience (line "premise" in the table). As philosophers, we easily identify here this long-questioned substratum which, being placed here in a misguided faith in realism, can only remain unreachable and enlarge the gap between our mind and the world, to the extent that their connection is irremediably lost. This is why Whorf's name has long been associated with relativism. This "hardy" (but "naïve" [1]) premise recurs regularly in the course of his analyses, as the background against which the "distortions" we operate in our understanding of language become visible. That is, in order to evaluate when the hidden analogies of grammar influence us, he compares our understanding of these analogies against "what things are like in the

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[1] Not to be heard in the same sense as Putnam's.

real world" (line "background" in the table). For instance, he states that while we objectify "ten days" following the model of the expression "ten men", we don't *really* ever perceive ten days, for our psychological constitution does not allow us to do so. He thus appeals to a property of our biological constitution, to our "nature", to what our perception "really" is. Then, he consolidates his interpretation via a comparison: our language and fashions of speaking against Hopi's language and fashions of speaking. It is again reality (anthropological reality) that is being appealed to in order to secure the identification of our interpretation of our language. And of course, language subsequently entails a certain understanding of reality (it influences thought).

Such a straight forward realism is not to be found in the second Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein observes the same phenomena as Whorf's without referring to a reality outside of language. He needs a background though, allowing him to identify where and how the grammar of our language-games bewitches us. His background is our language-games. It is primarily against language-games themselves that our misinterpretations of grammar are tested and brought to light. Then, if no actual language-game can be discovered to contrast against misguided interpretations, we can appeal to fictional language-games. Hence language-games play the part the "reality substratum" was playing with Whorf. And where Whorf appeals to anthropological language-games, with Wittgenstein imagined language-games replace real language-games (home or foreign). A counter part of this is that Wittgenstein's denunciation of grammatical misunderstanding focuses, as we have seen, on the issues of language and mind, in short, as opposed to Whorf's focus on physics, on the "outside world" (see line "Primary application").

c) *Difference in the status of metaphysical beliefs*

The difference in the ultimate status ascribed by each author to metaphysical beliefs mirrors the discrepancy of their respective ethical purposes. For Whorf, who identified those interpretations of our grammar thanks to a comparison with a "better description" of our "real experience", these interpretations are metaphors (line "consequences"). As such, they stand as "less accurate" than the representations which are not metaphors and reflect our experience more accurately. Whorf's conception thus relies on the idea of a scale, according to which language-games can fare better or worse in terms of their adequacy to the world. The metaphors flourish in what Whorf calls "common sense", but they also impact on our scientific language-games. Hopi language-games can fare better than ours and thus show us better ways in some cases. Hence Whorf rates language-games according to their being more or less metaphorical and thus mistaken: metaphors, ultimately, are mistakes. However, he does in no way disqualify them as language-games, but seems to accept that they are part of what we do with language in Western culture – in our form of life. This is a fairly Wittgensteinian conclusion, if we think of it, maybe more than Wittgenstein's own conclusion (line "Language-games…" and last line).

Wittgenstein's verdict is quite different. In his view, misleading analogies of language do not produce metaphors, but images, pictures. A metaphor describes something as something else. Wittgenstein's images are simply the face of things, their "visage" as we say in French. They are not mistakes. There's no point in

classifying a language-game as such as more or less accurate than another. The problem with images is that they bring about philosophical superstitions. However, as we all know, Wittgenstein is extremely vehement about those superstitions. Unlike Whorf who admits metaphors as part of language-games and forms of life, Wittgenstein more or less (according to whether we apply an austere reading or not) rejects philosophical superstitions outside of language use. But this conclusion does not sound very "Wittgensteinian" to me.

Besides these three main clusters of differences, there are isolated ones such as:
Whorf's analyses are based on grammatical features of language that are still marked in the form of our words, via reactance, but he deals with groups of words mainly (line "Type of evidence"). Wittgenstein deals with a more fined-grained sort of grammar, where grammatical nuances can be scrutinized within the use of one single word. But the grammatical distinctions do not appear in the very form of words: they are given with our attitudes towards language-games. The question remains whether technical linguistics could make sense of Wittgenstein's grammatical misunderstandings.

We have seen how the differences between Whorf's and Wittgenstein's views on our use of grammar seemed to weave into an entangled chiasm. As shown in the table, the puzzling aspect of this interpretation is that there is a broader chiasm as well: both alternatives on grammatical misunderstanding seem incoherent. Whorf's ground is philosophically faulty: he could simply be deemed a "wrong" counterpart of Wittgenstein. The problem is, in my view: Whorf conclusion is fine. Wittgenstein's ground is fine but his conclusion undermines its very ground. Although I couldn't articulate this yet, my intuition is that this chiasm, made apparent in the table, may actually provide a material and conceptual shape for some important philosophical problems. If this is so, it could be seen as a workable conceptual structure, from which we may learn something.

I am aware that not all of you will admit the "red tail" in my interpretation of Wittgenstein. It is in fact in line with Cora Diamond's "non chickening" interpretation, which I discussed in Paris in 2006, and a few arguments speak up for it.
   a) The most basic argument, shown in the table: We discard our metaphysical language-games as "not really language-games" although we do play metaphysical language-games. Since language-games were our evidence and our ground, we loose them. Language shouldn't be reformed. Philosophy leaves everything as it is. This argument is not very strong, but there are further arguments.
   b) In order to view what in our language is "not real language-games", we need to step out of our language-games. In doing so, we open the logical space of an overarching position above our language games, which is also a metaphysical superstition. This stance ultimately collapses into scepticism, just like Whorf's realism.
   c) Cora Diamond's argument: the outcome of Wittgenstein's criticism of Frege's understanding of language could only be that the relation between language and world cannot be articulated, that

language and reality stand in no specifiable relation at all. But then again we loose our ground and collapse into relativism. Hence if we represent a non chickening out Wittgenstein like posture, the red tail remains.

Hence we end up with 3 postures about grammatical "confusions", all of them either ill-grounded or self-contradictory. I am aware that in sketching those postures I haven't achieved any philosophical job yet, but I can point at a program. Our philosophical task then may consist in the following.

- Understanding the logical connections between the three postures described above. How do we circulate between them? Is there circulation or alternation, articulation? If we consider that the chiasm between Wittgenstein and Whorf is a chiasm between two different approaches to realism, this should teach us interesting things about realism.

- In order to shed light on those issues, I think we should question the link between Whorf's and Wittgenstein's respective type of evidence and their respective stance and conclusion. Whorf, as a linguist, appeals to marks that appear at the surface of our words. Grammar is thus visible. Wittgenstein's "marks", if we may call them so, appear in the interplay between language and our understanding of language. Would Wittgenstein's grammar be better described as felt? Felt in language-games? This certainly relates to the philosophical tasks I just sketched.

Another task consists in articulating a method for my "Semantics of Reason and Mind" anthropology project that is fully sustainable. In that purpose, I need to reach a conclusion that is philosophical sustainable, free of undermined premises collapsing into relativism, scepticism, etc. I will also need a concept of language and of its harmony with the world that allows one to account for images without appealing to derogatory concepts such as metaphors and superstitions. My idea is that the interplay, the looseness in the harmony is an essential feature of language, and that language is actually grounded in that looseness. But can we stick to this position without falling into relativism? And finally, in order to lay a methodological ground, I can't satisfy myself with an analysis of the interplay and connections between the postures described above. I need to describe one workable path that will take advantage of the benefits of these postures. This I haven't worked out yet.