

Colors, Culture, and Practices

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I

It is a remarkable fact that the truth or falsity of a judgment about what color some particular object or surface is is and is generally recognized to be independent of how that color happens to look to the particular person who utters that judgment. Someone looking at an object, who suffers from some as yet unrecognized defect of color vision, or who is looking in visually unfavorable circumstances, may have her or his false judgment about its color corrected by someone blind who has been told what color it is by a reliable informant.

Wittgenstein appears to deny this at one point in the *Remarks on Colour*, when he not only asserted "That it seems so (*so scheint*) to human beings is their criterion for its *being* so" (III, 98), but added that only in exceptional cases might *being* and *seeming* be independent of one another (99). If Wittgenstein meant by this no more than that it is a necessary condition of our color judgments being as they are that, for example, "we *call* brown the table which under certain circumstances appears brown to the normal-sighted" (97), then it would be difficult to disagree. But the use of the word 'criterion', as I shall suggest later, is misleading. For the recognition of a color is not generally the application of a test. In puzzle cases or deviant cases we may of course consult those with certifiably normal eye-sight and perhaps also have been trained in some relevant type of visual discrimination to tell us *how some object looks to them* as a test or criterion of *what color it is*. But this is so only in such exceptional cases. And notice that those who satisfy the required conditions, and therefore are able to provide the needed criterion, had themselves already been tested in respect of their capacity to recognize—without any test or criterion apart from successful recognition—what color the relevant types of objects in fact *are*. They turn out to be, like most of the rest of us, among those for whom in the

vast majority of cases the distinction between *what color things or surfaces in fact are* and *what color they seem to be to me here and now* is unproblematic.

This distinction after all is a commonplace. It is unambiguously presupposed in such practical activities as those of painters, interior decorators, sign-makers, and students of the physiology of color vision, as well as by ordinary speakers. That this distinction is so widely presupposed does not of course of itself provide sufficient reason for upholding it. But I shall argue that once we have understood the nature of that distinction, we shall also understand that, although the possibility of abandoning it cannot be logically or conceptually ruled out, that possibility is one which it would be empty to entertain. In so arguing I will be unable to avoid engagement with issues whose present canonical formulation we owe to Wittgenstein, to some degree in his discussions of color, but even more in his examination of the possibility of rule-following in action or judgment by a solitary individual. And because the interpretation of what Wittgenstein says is seriously disputed, questions of interpretation will have to be faced.

My initial aim then is to identify the conditions which enable us to ascribe objectivity to color judgments, so that we can understand how we are able to agree to the extraordinary extent that we do in marking the distinction between *what color objects are* and *what color they seem to be to particular individuals in particular circumstances* and what it is that constrains us in so doing and undermines any tendency by an individual to insist upon making her or his own experience of color the sovereign test of what judgments to make. A first such constraint is provided just by the multiplicity of cooperative types of activity participation in which requires that judgments about color should be understood as true or false, independently of the experience of particular individuals.

We, for example, match the colors in fabrics, we design and interpret signals by the use of colors, we identify flags, flowers, and species of birds partly by colors, physicians use skin color in making diagnoses, weather forecasters refer to colors of clouds and skies, scientific instruments use colors as signs, and painters not only use, but extend the range of and the range of uses of colors in ways that not only require a shared vocabulary, but also shared standards of judgment in the application of that vocabulary. Any but marginal disagreements in the use of that vocabulary would render participation in such activities in anything like their present form impossible. But is this not merely a contingent feature of social life as we know it? Could there perhaps be some alternative form of life in which this constraint upon disagreement had been removed? Consider a passage from the *Philosophical Investigations* (II, xi, p. 226) in which Wittgenstein envisages this possibility: "Does it make sense to say that people generally agree in their judgments of color? What would it be like for them not to?—One man would say a flower was red which another called blue, and so on.—But what right should we have to call these people's words 'red' and 'blue' *our* 'color words'?—How would they learn to use these words? And is the language-game which they learn still such as we call the use of 'names of color'? There are evidently differences of degree here."

What Wittgenstein invites us to imagine seems to be a society in which each person names colors without reference to how they are named by others. The more it is that such persons disagree in their naming of colors, the further they are from resembling us in our uses. But it is important that the difference between them and us is not merely a matter of the *extent* of our agreements and disagreements. For there is a second constraint upon our judgments of color, one embodied in a further set of agreements, agreements upon how to explain and thereby resolve disagreements about color, when they do arise. There are four relevant types of explanation to which appeal may be made.

When one person disagrees with another as to what color a particular object or surface is, we may be able to explain the difference in judgment as a result of inviting them to view that object or surface in the same light from the same angle of vision when placed at the same distance from that object or surface. If under those conditions they come to agree in judgment, we shall reasonably conclude that it was a failure to satisfy one of these three conditions which caused them to perceive the color of that particular object or surface differently and so to judge differently. It may be however that even in the same ideal conditions for the perception of color the two still disagree and a next step is to ask whether one of them has not as yet learned to discriminate adequately, at least so far as the color or colors of this particular object or surface are concerned. A failure of this second type of explanation will lead us then to enquire whether one or both persons suffers from some defective form of color vision, that is, is in some way—whether from physiological or psychological causes—color blind. And, if that too turns out not to be the case, then we shall fourthly and finally ask if the disagreement is not about colors themselves, but only about the names of colors, by confronting the two persons who disagree with some standard set of examples of colors and shades of colors, in which a very large number of shades are discriminated and named, so that they may discover, say, whether a particular shade which one calls ‘magenta’ the other calls ‘puce’, or, as in Wittgenstein’s more radical example whether what one calls ‘red’ the other calls ‘blue’.

What we may well discover in searching for such explanations and resolutions of disagreement is evidence of some past failure on the part of one or more of those who now disagree to have learned how to discriminate and to name colors, either because she or he was not adequately exposed to the standard methods of teaching or because, although so exposed, there was some barrier to her or his learning. The standard methods of teaching and learning about colors are of two kinds. There are those involved in acquiring an elementary color vocabulary, the normal property of any child. And there are those involved in the more specialized education required of those apprenticed within particular practices—in learning how to paint ceremonial masks, say, or how to collect medicinal plants—where a wider range of discriminations is required.

So in one and the same process of learning the uses of the color vocabulary are extended and the abilities to recognize and to distinguish are

developed. We learn of course not only ostensively, but also at later stages from descriptions and classifications. Having learnt 'red' and 'yellow', I may have 'orange' explained to me not by some further act of ostension, but as a color intermediate between 'red' and 'yellow', and such a description may enable me to recognize and to name orange. Moreover in learning how to use one and the same vocabulary of colors different individuals often begin the learning process by being introduced to notably different sets of examples. The shade of red which provides my initial paradigm for uses of the word 'red' may be very different from that which provides yours. Nonetheless as we and other speakers extend our range of uses beyond these initial examples, we do so in a rule-governed way which gives evidence of common adherence to one and the same set of linguistic rules in terms of which we order our diverse experiences of color.

What can be learned can of course always be mislearned. But what is mislearned is what can be corrected and it is in subjecting our judgments to correction by others, through admitting the force of one or more of the types of explanation invoked to explain and to resolve our disagreements with those others—particularly when those disagreements threaten our cooperative participation in those shared activities which require agreement in judgments concerning color—that we assent to the distinction between *what color objects are* and *what color they seem to me to be in these circumstances*, and so to standards of truth and falsity in judgments concerning what color objects are.

It is important that it is our common conformity to the established and standard rules governing the use and application of color words in the particular shared language in whose uses we participate which makes it possible for us to make true or false judgments concerning color. And if we misuse color words or if we judge falsely, it is our violation of these standards and rules and not the fact that we have deviated from the consensus of an overwhelming majority of speakers of our language which renders us in need of correction. Because the consensus of that majority is an agreement concerning those particular rules and concepts, any failure in respect of the relevant rules and concepts will also of course be a deviation from that consensus. And certainly were that consensus not to be maintained over an extended period of time, a necessary condition for there being established rules and concepts in this area of discourse would no longer hold. Nonetheless it is not the consensus itself which is normative for our use of color or any other words; what is normative is supplied by the rules and concepts in assenting to which the majority brings that consensus into existence.

To suppose otherwise would be a mistake. For it would make of the customary uses of the majority a particular kind of *criterion* for correct use, a criterion to which appeal could be made to determine correct use and application, independently of an ability to recognize correct uses and applications by oneself or by others. Were there such a criterion, knowing what it is would be one thing and being able to apply it would be quite another. But there is no such criterion and none is needed (compare what Wittgenstein says in *Remarks on*

the Foundations of Mathematics, VII, 40 about identity: "For of course I don't make use of the agreement of human beings to affirm identity. What criterion do you use, then? None at all." See also VII, 39). When someone knows how to apply and use color words correctly, and how to recognize correctness and incorrectness in others, there is nothing else remaining for him or her to know, something that would, as it were, provide an extrinsic guarantee. True judgment requires no more than recognition. Yet this claim may be thought to encounter the following difficulty.

If there are rules governing the use and application of color words, then, as Wittgenstein insists, there must be a difference between merely thinking that you have used such words in conformity to those rules, while not having actually done so, and actually having done so (*Philosophical Investigation* 202). But if there is no extrinsic criterion, how is this difference to be established in particular cases? It is established in the same way that disagreement is resolved, that is, by appealing to one or more of the four types of explanation which I sketched earlier. One defends the correctness of one's own judgments first by explaining how one had viewed the relevant object of vision in terms of distance, angle of vision and light, secondly by establishing that one had learned to make the relevant set of discriminations between, say, this shade of purple and that of magenta, thirdly by providing the evidence that one has no form of psychological or physiological color blindness or distortion and fourthly by establishing one's grasp of the relevant set of names of colors. There is nothing further to be done to show that one has reported correctly what color something is rather than having been deceived by how it looks or looked to oneself.

This reply however may generate another objection. For it is obvious that as a matter of historical fact the use of color vocabularies predates an ability to formulate and make any systematic use of some of our commonest explanations of disagreement. Knowledge of the range and types of color blindness and distortion, for example, requires a certain kind of scientific sophistication, not available in all times and places. And true judgments about color antedate catalogues of colors and shades by millennia. Perhaps some aspects of these types of explanatory procedure will have been invoked from some very early stage when disagreements arose over color, but anything like appeal to them in a fully fledged form must occur at a late stage in the history of the rule-governed use of color language.

What this objection brings out is that agreement in the rule-governed use of color-language requires the *possibility* of explanations of these general types being given in more or less fully fledged form. It does not require that any particular competent user of such language should be able to give them in such form. What is necessary is both that such users should be able to distinguish implicitly, if not explicitly, between the question of what color that particular object or surface or light *is* and the question of what color it *seems to me to be* and that in so doing they should recognize implicitly, if not explicitly, that true judgments about color are independent of the point of view of any particular person. In so doing they will be acknowledging that on

any particular occasion the standpoint of some other person may be superior to their own in respect of the truth as to some particular judgment concerning color. It is this reference to and regard for the standpoint of other persons which renders our ordinary and normal language of colors inescapably social, one the rules for whose correct use are independent of the standpoint of any particular individual and in this way impose a certain kind of impersonality in judgments concerning color.

The corrigibility and impersonality of our judgments as to what color objects or surfaces are both arise then from the same set of established social agreements which constrain our applications of the color vocabulary. But this is not the only aspect of judgment of color which seems to be inseparable from the social dimensions of the language of colors. Judgments about colors are uttered as speech acts and the intelligibility of a speech-act is a matter of socially shared understandings of what additional information about the speaker has to be supplied or presupposed if a given speech-act is to be construed as an intelligible performance.

Consider the actions of someone who moves around a room judging truly of each object what color it is: "That is magenta," she or he says, and then "That is ultramarine" and "That is emerald green." We can without difficulty imagine acquiring additional information about such a performance which renders it fully intelligible. This is, for example, a child or a foreigner trying out newly acquired English color words to make sure that she or he has got them right. Or perhaps she or he has been suffering from some type of loss of memory and is testing the extent of her or his recovery of memory by naming colors. In each of these types of case the point and purpose of making such color judgments can be discovered, so that the agent's actions can be understood as intelligible in the light afforded by that point and purpose. But suppose instead that when asked what he or she is doing, the person engaged in such a performance has no true reply to offer, except "Judging truly about color." "Judging truly about color" does not by itself without any further point and purpose name an intelligible type of speech-act or indeed an intelligible action of any kind. In what does the unintelligibility of such a performance consist?

Intelligibility of actions in general and of speech-acts in particular has two aspects.¹ An action is intelligible firstly if and insofar as others—socially versed others, that is—know how to respond to it. When such others are baffled by what someone else has just done, because there is no appropriate way of acting in response, it is because they are unable to bring what has been done under some description of a kind which in turn makes it understandable for them—by the standards of everyday life—to act in some particular way. A second feature of intelligible action is that in performing it not only can the agent reasonably expect to elicit a certain range of types of response from others, but she or he can find some point or purpose in doing whatever it is, within the wider range of activities and projects which that agent can recognize as her or his own. To act unintelligibly is not merely to puzzle others; it is oneself to be at a loss about what one is doing in doing this.

These two aspects of intelligibility are closely related. When someone performs an action which she or he finds unintelligible in that context to be doing—walking round the room naming colors, for example—she or he would be unable to say either to others or to her or himself what the point of doing *that then* and *there* was. When someone finds someone else's action unintelligible, that unintelligibility can only be removed by that person's being able to explain what the point and purpose of doing *that then* and *there* was. To say "I am just doing it for its own sake" or "for no particular reason" is not sufficient to remove the unintelligibility. What has to be added is some description which makes doing *that kind of thing* on *appropriate occasions*, whether for its own sake or for the sake of something further, intelligible. If neither of these can be specified, the action will remain unintelligible. If both are successfully specified, the action will have been made intelligible by being assigned a place in the sequence of the agent's actions, so that it can be understood as standing in some specific type of relationship to what precedes it (sometimes not what immediately precedes it) and to what may follow it.

Intelligibility is thus a property of actions in their relationship to the sequences in which they occur, both those sequences of interaction in which agents respond in turn to each other and those sequences of actions which some particular agent moves. For an action to be unintelligible is for it to be uninterpretable, given the context in which it has occurred, in terms of those types of reason, motive, purpose, and intention for which the norms of the shared culture specify certain types of response, either immediately or later, as appropriate or inappropriate. Of course an action may seem unintelligible on occasion to those who observe it only because they lack the necessary information about some particular agent's reasons, matters, purposes, and intentions or about the context in which he is acting. Were that information to be supplied, the action would then be understood as intelligible. But, when all relevant information has been made available, it may turn out that certain actions just are unintelligible. So, for example, if in the course of a conversation between physician and patient, in a darkened room, the physician, between giving a prognosis for the patient's eye ailments and offering nutritional advice, was to interject "The red of the poppies stands out against the cornflowers," his utterance would be at least *prima facie* unintelligible, whereas were the same person commenting on the landscape, while looking out the window together with someone else, the same utterance would be perfectly intelligible.

What I have suggested so far is that our uses and understandings of judgments concerning color are informed by socially established standards of corrigibility, of impersonality, and of intelligibility. And, if this is so, it might seem to follow that participation in and mastery of some socially established language are necessary conditions for any unproblematic use and application of a vocabulary of colors.

Suppose, for example, as some have done, that somewhere there is or was a solitary human language-user, deprived from earliest infancy of the society of other language-users, but her or himself the inventor somehow or other of

something that is or approximates to a language. If such a person is to make genuine judgments concerning colors, then it would seem from what has been said so far that they must be corrigible. Yet how could such a solitary and isolated person correct her or himself in respect of judgments of color on the basis of nothing more than her or his own experiences? And if such a person is to make *correct* reports of her or his experiences of color, then it would seem that those reports must be such that any honest reporter would make the same reports of those same experiences, that is, that certain requirements of impersonality would still have to be satisfied. But how could someone restricted to her or his own experiences, and unable to refer to others for any sort of corroboration or correction, achieve such impersonality? And again, since such a person could only be talking to and for her or himself, how could we discriminate in her or his case between the intelligible utterance of a judgment of color from the mere repetition of certain strings of sounds elicited by certain repeated experiences? What would enable us to regard her or his speech acts as intelligible? How then would it be possible for such a solitary and isolated person to satisfy these three conditions conjointly, conditions of corrigibility, and of impersonality of judgment, and of intelligibility of utterance?

These are not mere rhetorical questions. To answer them we need to be able to supply a philosophically adequate account of what kind of language use might be possible for just such an isolated and solitary individual with adequately rich and repeated color experiences. Happily for us, this is an area already explored by Wittgenstein and, even if his account has turned out to be open to rival and incompatible interpretations, it remains nonetheless the best account that we possess so far.

II

Wittgenstein in the *Philosophical Investigations* clearly and unambiguously argued for the conclusion that there cannot be such a thing as a private language, if by that is meant a language not only used by only one person, but composed of expressions referring only to such private objects as her or his sensations. Colors, as we have seen, are not such private objects and so this conclusion has no bearing on my question. What does bear on it is the further conclusion, which some interpreters have ascribed to Wittgenstein, that a single, solitary individual is incapable of rule-following of the kind required for the use of anything worth calling a language.

Wittgenstein wrote: "Is what we call 'obeying' a rule something that it would be possible for only *one* man to do, and to do only *once* in his life? . . . 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; and so on. To obey a rule, to make a report, to give an order, to play a game of chess, are *customs* (uses, institutions) . . ." (*Philosophical Investigations* 199). He also wrote that "it means nothing to say: in the history of mankind just once

was a game invented, and that game was never played by anyone. . . . Only in a quite definite surrounding do the words 'invent a game' 'play a game' make sense. . . . In the same way it cannot be said either that just once in the history of mankind did someone follow a signpost. . . ." (*Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics* VI, 43).

Everyone agrees that in these and cognate passages Wittgenstein is denying that it could ever be the case that on only one occasion a rule was followed, an expression meaningfully used, a concept given application. The sharpest of disagreements arises over what answer Wittgenstein is taken to have given to the question of whether it could ever be the case that only one person followed a particular rule, used a particular expression meaningfully, or gave application to a particular concept.

Colin McGinn interprets Wittgenstein in *Philosophical Investigation* 199 to be asserting "that if there is just one man then *he* must follow his rules more than once, but if there are many men it can be enough that *each* follows" the rules just once, or possibly not at all, since what are required, on Wittgenstein's view thus interpreted, are many occasions of rule-following, but not necessarily many rule-followers.² So when Wittgenstein speaks of 'customs', 'uses', 'institutions', and elsewhere of 'practices', McGinn points out that such words "are never qualified with 'social' or 'community' " and that so to qualify them "is not pleonastic."³ So his conclusion is that Wittgenstein held that "a sign has meaning only in virtue of being (repeatedly) used in a certain way. *This thesis does not in itself carry any suggestion that meaning is inconceivable in social isolation.*"⁴

McGinn himself goes even further: "Wittgenstein is right to describe rule-following as a practice or custom only in the sense that necessarily rules are things that *can* be followed on repeated occasions, not that necessarily they are repeatedly followed. . . ." So neither McGinn's Wittgenstein nor McGinn would presumably see anything conceptually impossible in the notion of an isolated person inventing and using in speech only with her or himself a vocabulary of colors. McGinn imagines someone who, surviving in conditions of complete, solitariness from infancy onwards, later, while still isolated, invents sign-posts and keeps records of the weather,⁶ tasks of just the kind for which color discriminations are often employed.

Norman Malcolm has retorted that in constructing his imaginary account of such a person McGinn has failed to recognize that such activities as those involved in inventing sign-posts cannot be carried through except by those who already possess a language, who are already rule-followers.⁷ So the notion of an isolated rule-follower does not make sense, "because the idea of a rule is embedded in an environment of teaching, testing, correcting—within a community where there is agreement in acting in the way that is called 'following the rule'. To withdraw that environment is to withdraw the concept of following a rule."⁸

Malcolm goes on to argue that the example of an isolated rule-follower constructed by McGinn presupposes that such a rule-follower already possesses

a language, which presumably she or he had had to learn from someone else, so that the example is not after all one of a person inventing a rule-following use in isolation from others.¹⁰ A problem with Malcolm's reply to McGinn is that, if sound and if generalized, it proves too much. For if no one could ever innovate by producing a new rule-following use of language, unless he or she already possessed language, how could language ever begin? If Malcolm's argument is sound, it raises difficult questions about the possibility of a first introduction of language. It is indeed likely that at the very first beginning of language use, whenever and wherever that was, there were behaviors which approximated to language-use before there was genuine rule-following; but there clearly was a time before *any* language and a time when genuine language use had already begun. And how such a transition could have taken place seems puzzling on Malcolm's view. Is McGinn then right on the point of philosophical substance? (Whether it is Malcolm or McGinn who is right as to the interpretation of Wittgenstein is a question which for the moment I leave open.)

The difficulties which McGinn's view confronts can best be brought out by returning to the question of whether or not the three conditions which would have to be satisfied, if a solitary and isolated person were to be held to possess and to be able to use a genuine language of colors, can be jointly satisfied. It will however illuminate what is at stake in McGinn's position if we begin by considering only the first two of these, the requirement that genuine uses of a color vocabulary must be corrigible and that therefore the isolated and solitary person must possess the resources necessary for correcting both her or his misuses of language and own false judgments, and the requirement that judgments about color should be impersonal.

Earlier I connected the need for judgments about color to be corrigible with their impersonality as instances of rule-following. What assures us both in such judgments and more generally that something is a case of actual rather than merely apparent rule-following ("to *believe* one is following a rule is not following the rule" *Philosophical Investigation* 202, as translated by Malcolm) in the making of a particular judgment is, as I noted, that it would be judged to be so by *anyone* with the requisite competence and integrity, no matter what their standpoint. An impartial and impersonal spectator would so judge concerning it. It is only insofar as we accord this impersonal character and a correspondingly impersonal authority to rules that we treat them as *rules*.

In the case of judgments about color the distorting partialities to be overcome are those of perceptual standpoint and the incompetences to be remedied those derived from deficiencies of color vision or vocabulary. With other types of judgment it is other types of partiality and incompetence which have to be identified and overcome from some similarly impersonal point of view. The question therefore is: how is it possible for us to assume a properly impersonal standpoint with regard to our own judgments, both generally and in respect of judgments concerning colors?

If an impersonal standpoint is one that is neutral between the claims and interest of different actual persons, it cannot be the standpoint of McGinn's

socially isolated person. But McGinn could of course reply that the impersonality of rule-following only requires always being open to the *possibility* of correction by others and that these others need be no more than *possible* others. McGinn's solitary individual might therefore be able to provide for these possibilities, even in isolation from all actual others. She or he would be open to the possibility of self-correction by imagined, possible others, that is in fact by her or himself, in the imagined role of a possible other. A set of counterfactuals, specifying how she or he would react, were he or she to be challenged by others, would be true of her or him. But they could remain *counterfactual* without damaging her or his status as a rule-follower.

What this brings out is the way in which the development of McGinn's position places continually increasing demands on the conceptual imagination. McGinn says on an allied point: "I am merely reporting my intuitions of logical possibility," acknowledges that other philosophers do not share his intuitions, but asserts that "they are all one has to go on in deciding modal questions"¹¹ His position thus formulated seems to entail that between the contingent impossibilities disclosed by empirical enquiry and purely logical possibility there is no stopping-place in conceptual investigations concerned with determining possibilities. That this is false is suggested by reopening the question of the joint satisfiability by a solitary and isolated language-user of the three conditions for the use of a language of colors.

Consider first one further aspect of the first, the corrigibility condition. David Pears in arguing that Wittgenstein may not have rejected the possibility of a solitary language-user has pointed out that, in actual linguistic communities, not only do language-users correct their judgments by reference to two "stabilizing resources"—"standard objects and reassuring interlocutors"—but their use of these resources is such that appeal to one is not independent of appeal to the other.¹² It is only because and insofar as we suppose that other members of our community have continued to use the same words of the same objects that we are able to appeal to their use to confirm or correct our own. And of course it is also only because and insofar as we are assured that those objects have continued to possess the properties which make it correct to use those same words of them that we are able so to appeal. In our normal procedures the appeal to reassuring interlocutors and the appeal to standard objects stand or fall together.

With our imagined solitary, isolated person it is quite otherwise. For in her or his case there are no reassuring interlocutors. So it is not only that the appeal to standard objects is detached from that to interlocutors, but that by being made independent it is itself weakened. In this weaker form can it still provide the required degree and kind of corrigibility? Before I propose an answer to this question, there is another type of difficulty to be considered.

Any use of a color vocabulary which is more than minimal involves, as I noticed earlier, the rule-governed extension of the use and application of color words beyond the situations and the types of situation in which they were first used; any use of a color vocabulary which achieves intelligible utterance

requires the performance of a certain *range* of intelligible speech-acts in giving expression to judgments about colors. What degree of extension and what precise range I leave open. There is even so a tension between the satisfaction of these two requirements and the satisfaction of the corrigibility condition. For the larger the degree of such extensions of use, and the wider the range of intelligible speech-acts, the greater the need to show and the greater the difficulty in showing that the corrigibility condition is sufficiently strong and adequately satisfied. So an isolated, solitary, speaker capable of only the most limited judgments expressed in a very narrow range of speech-acts would need far less in the way of resources of corrigibility than does a normal speaker in an ordinary linguistic community.

Does this rescue McGinn's thesis from its difficulties? I think not and for a crucial reason. In trying to envisage McGinn's isolated, solitary speaker, whether as a speaker of the language of colors or more generally, we have moved too far away from the actualities of language use, as we know them, to be able to say with any precision or confidence what is possible and what is not. In so contending I am relying upon a very different conception of possibility from McGinn's.

The paradigmatic example of the possible is the actual. As we in any particular type of case move away from the actual in thought, carefully stripping it of its properties one by one we move from imagined cases in which we can clearly say 'Although never actual this type of person, thing or state of affairs is clearly possible', for we can specify with some precision and confidence what would have to be the case for the otherwise merely possible to become actual, through intermediate cases to those in which so much has been stripped away that, although we have not arrived at the limiting case of the logically impossible, we no longer know what to say. And this, I want to suggest, is how we ought to respond to the case of an imagined solitary and isolated user of a language of colors.

Moreover there is some reason to believe that this position on possibility may be closer to that presupposed by Wittgenstein than that of either McGinn or Malcolm. McGinn notes that Wittgenstein asks, but does not answer the question: "Is what we call 'obeying a rule' something that it would be possible for only *one* man to do?" (*Philosophical Investigation* 199), yet goes on to impute an answer to Wittgenstein.¹³ Malcolm interprets Wittgenstein's question: "Could there be only one human being that calculated? Could there be only one that followed a rule? Are these questions somewhat similar to this one 'Can one man alone engage in commerce?'" (*Remarks on the Philosophy of Mathematics* VI, 45) by asserting that "just as carrying on a trade presupposes a community, so too does arithmetic and following a rule."¹⁴ So each converts a question into a thesis. But perhaps all that we are capable of when the conceptual imagination has been stretched to this point by this type of case are questions, unanswerable questions. We have no *a priori* resources for going beyond questions to answers and in acknowledging this our original question finds its answer. The concept of a solitary, isolated speaker of language, whether

concerning colors or more generally, is neither that of an evidently possible type of person or of an evidently impossible type of person. It is instead a concept whose nature and status is essentially problematic.

Does it follow that all claims which assert or presuppose the possibility or actuality of someone initially isolated from or later somehow disengaged from the shared agreements of a common language, who has or fabricates in its place some language of her or his own, must be rejected? Are stories of infants reared by wolves who come to speak in a language of their own or of philosophical inventors of egocentrically defined phenomenalist languages fables always to be rejected? Nothing so radical follows. What does follow is that the onus is upon those who make such claims to show how and why in these particular detailed circumstances possibilities of which we can make so little when they are articulated only in general terms can be acknowledged. For until the detail has been spelled out, we do not know precisely what it is which we are being invited to declare possible or impossible. Until then we have been provided with insufficient material for our modal intuitions to address. 'An infant reared by wolves who invents a language' does not as yet either succeed or fail in specifying a concept with possible application. Notice that on this view of possibility, to assert that something is possible goes further than to assert that it has not yet been shown to be impossible. To make the former assertion we need to know a good deal more than is required in the case of the latter, in McGinn's example a good deal more about how the presuppositions of individual and solitary language-use are to be supplied. The agreements of shared languages give expression, just as Wittgenstein says, to shared customs, uses, and institutions. An individual who separates her or himself from or is separated from those agreements would have, as McGinn recognizes, to invent her or his own customs, uses, and institutions. But in such invention much more has to be involved than McGinn's fables recognize. My claim is not at all Malcolm's, that such invention can be shown to be impossible. It is that everything that we know about customs, uses, and institutions tells us that in different types of case different and often enough quite complex conditions would have to be satisfied; and that whether they *could* be satisfied in any particular instance needs to be shown for that particular instance. And what holds more generally also holds of questions about solitary and isolated users of a language of colors.

It is at this point that someone may protest impatiently that the examination of these Wittgensteinian arguments has been an irrelevant excursus, a misleading distraction from very different considerations towards which the arguments of the first part of this essay ought to have directed us. In that first part I identified the nature of the social agreements embodied in or presupposed by our uses of language concerning colors. In this second part I have tried to show that those agreements exemplify the constraints of shared social uses, customs, and institutions in just the way that Wittgenstein claimed that they did, that what is true in these respects of the language of colors is what is true of language in general. But, so the objector whom I am imagining will

complain, the agreement in use and application of a vocabulary of colors needs to be explained quite differently, in a way that is specific to that vocabulary, namely by an appeal to the scientific facts about color and its perception.

Jonathan Westphal has argued compellingly that "there is a 'general formula' of a certain kind under which the same colours, correlated with different frequencies, fall," a formula according to which what makes yellow objects yellow is "the small amount of blue light *relative to light of the other colours* which they reflect" and "a green object . . . is an object which *refuses* to reflect a significant proportion of red light relative to lights of the other colors, including green."¹⁵ The wavelengths of light, the facts of reflection and of lightening and darkening thus provide a way of defining color. But, so our imagined objector might proceed, the physical facts are invariant, so that what is presented by way of color for perception must be one and the same for all perceivers. The neurophysiology of color perception is also generally uniform. There are of course a small minority of defective perceivers. But given the invariant facts of color perception for the vast majority of persons and the invariant facts of the physics of color, agreement in color discrimination is physically and neurophysiologically determined.¹⁶ And these facts are what underpin and explain agreement in color vocabulary and agreement in color judgment. The social features of such agreement are at best secondary.

Yet if this final conclusion were justified, we would expect to find something approaching complete agreement in color vocabulary not only within particular cultural and social orders, but between different and heterogeneous cultural and social orders. So that our next question has to be: do we in fact find such agreement?

III

Nothing is more striking, so it turns out, than the range of variations and disagreements which are embodied in the different schemes of color identification and classification which are deployed in different languages. So that if we were to conclude from Wittgenstein's or any other arguments—such as the argument from the facts of physics and neurophysiology—that in respect of colors we must speak as all, or almost all other human beings do, we should be mistaken. Indeed my use of the pronoun "we" up to this point has now to be put in question. Like Wittgenstein, like many other philosophers, I have used this pronoun recurrently without ever asking who "we" are. But the "we" of one social and cultural order turns out to speak very differently from the "we" of certain others.

Consider then the range of differences between the languages spoken in different cultural and social orders in respect of the vocabulary of colors. The Dani of New Guinea have only two color words '*mili*' which is used of blacks, greens, and blues and '*mola*' which is used of whites, reds, oranges, yellow, and some kindred colors.¹⁷ In Irish Dinneen's *Dictionary* says of the adjective '*gorm*' that it means 'blue; rich green, as grass; negro tint', as well

incidentally as 'noble'. In Tarahumara, an Uto-Aztecan language, '*siyóname*' is used both of what we call 'blue' and what we call 'green'.¹⁸ In the Berber language, Kabyle, '*azegzaw*' is used of blue, green and grey.¹⁹ Berlin and Kay have indeed been able to distinguish eight stages in the development of color vocabularies, ranging from languages, such as that of the Dani, with only two terms, to the eleven terms of contemporary everyday American English or the eleven terms of Zuni and the twelve terms of Hungarian and Russian.

Difference however extends beyond vocabulary. We noticed earlier that, when the learners of some particular color vocabulary are initiated into its use by means of paradigmatic examples, they also, insofar as they are successful learners, acquire a capacity to extend the use and application of the expressions which they have learned to an indefinite range of further examples. To this we must now add that characteristically and generally this extended set of uses includes a variety of metaphorical applications and that agreement in metaphor within any one social and cultural order is as striking as agreement in the use of color words in general. This is obvious and indeed unimpressive when the metaphors are dead metaphors, as when in current English we speak of feeling blue or seeing red. But those metaphors which are alive in a particular language-in-use give expression to a variety of beliefs about identity, resemblance, and relationship which are thus articulated in a way that makes them available for the categorization of objects and properties and happenings. And indeed in such cases the distinction between literal and metaphorical uses is characteristically drawn only from the standpoint of some external observer, in terms of what would be accounted a literal use or a metaphorical use in that observer's language rather than in the language of the observed. So it would be if we as observers, speaking French or English, were so to classify the uses of '*azegzaw*' in Kabyle. And living and powerful metaphors vary, of course, from language to language and from culture to culture, both generally and in the metaphorical uses of color terms.

A third aspect of difference is that of how color words enter into the conceptual organization of experience in combination with other types of expression, so that realities as encountered within a particular culture are categorized in one way rather than another. In consequence colors act as signs of other realities and both the nature of the color vocabulary and the place of colors in the conceptual and categorical organization of experience set constraints upon what kinds of signs they can be. So in the Kabyle language '*azegzaw*', being used of vegetables and herbs which are eaten green and raw in the spring and of the fodder which feeds the cattle, is associated with spring and with morning and is a sign of good fortune, so that to make a gift of something green, especially in the morning, is to contribute to the good fortune of the recipient.²⁰ But in other societies green will function quite differently or not at all in their culture's semiotic code.

So here we have a third kind of difference—albeit one closely related to the second kind—distinguishing the ways in which the language of colors is used in some social and cultural orders from that in which it is used in

others. It thus seems that we have to relativize the Wittgensteinian thesis about agreement in the use and application of a vocabulary of colors to the languages-in-use of different social and cultural orders. Within each such order agreement in judgments concerning colors is just what that thesis said that it was, an inescapable feature of the use of the language of colors. But differences in color vocabulary, metaphorical extension and categorical organization between different languages-in-use make it the case that the inescapable agreements of one social and cultural order are not the same as the inescapable agreements of certain other such orders. There is not just one language of colors which we speak; there are multifarious *we's*, each of whom has its own language.²¹

One response to the discovery of the extent of the differences between the color vocabularies and idioms of different languages has been to attempt to minimize the significance of those differences by suggesting that they have a superficial character. And this would presumably be the response of the objector whom I imagined earlier. The physics and neurophysiology of color vision do indeed, so it is claimed by such an objector, ensure that all, or almost all human beings perceive and discriminate the same spectrum of colors and shades. It is just that in different languages that spectrum is segmented at different points, so that in some languages, for example, there is a single name for the range that includes both blue and green, while in others, as in English, there are two names, one for blue and one for green. But there is an answer to this response. For the facts about differences in color perception and discrimination turn out to be somewhat more complex than this claim is able to allow.

There are, of course, important invariances in color perception and discrimination, due to the uniformities discovered by physics and neurophysiology, and also correspondingly important uniformities in color vocabularies. A range of focal colors, primary and nonprimary, can be identified, which speakers with very different color vocabularies from different social and cultural orders can agree in identifying without much difficulty in a variety of ways; but note at once that even nonprimary focal colors, such as purple, orange, and brown, are assimilated in different cultures with different color vocabularies to different primary focal colors, so that brown will be in one instance assimilated to yellow and in another to black (consider how in neither type of language for very different types of reason would we ask Wittgenstein's question: "What does it mean to say 'Brown is akin to yellow'?" *Remarks on Colour* III, 47). And in cases where two primary focal colors are given a single name, as is sometimes the case with blue and green, there are some cultures in which the paradigmatic example of the color so named, offered by native speakers, will be focal blue and others in which it will be focal green, so that in this type of case difference is not just a matter of the segmentation of a spectrum. The neurophysiology of color vision thus to some significant extent underdetermines the discrimination of color and its attentive perception, and the different color vocabularies of different cultures do seem genuinely to give expression to differences in discrimination and attention which have been embodied in socially established practices.²²

Moreover in experiments in which speakers of Tarahumara, a language in which, as I noted earlier, '*siyóname*' names a color which includes both what English speakers name 'blue' and what English speakers name 'green', were matched with speakers of English, there were significant differences between the two groups in the performance of a certain type of discriminatory task to which the Tarahumara speakers had been introduced for the first time, differences which the evidence warrants us in ascribing to the difference in color vocabulary. So language itself does at least to some degree determine attention and discrimination and, when in some at least of the languages to which I have referred—not including contemporary English or for that matter contemporary Zuni—the particular organization of the experience of color is integrated in some highly specific way into both those metaphorical uses of language which link color to other aspects of experience and that categorical scheme through which, for the speakers of that language, experience in general is organized, the "we" who speak that particular language will in some cases find themselves separated from the speakers of some other alternative languages with their own idiosyncratic integrative schemes by the mutual untranslatability of their languages. For in such cases there will be in their particular language sentences and sets of sentences for which there are no equivalents in some of the others. And the speakers of one of any two such mutually untranslatable languages will use such sentences to make often true, and occasionally false, judgments which cannot be made in the other.

To speak of the partial underdetermination of language by neurophysiological stimulation and of a consequent partial untranslatability may suggest that something like Quine's position is being advanced. But the differences from Quine are crucial. Quine's theses are conceptual. The theses propounded by Lakoff and others are empirical. And the same type of evidence which shows that some judgments about color are underdetermined by the neurophysiological facts also shows that other judgments about color, those concerning the primary focal colors for instance, are sufficiently determined by those facts. So that the relevant issues of untranslatability are not at all those raised by Quine.

What such untranslatability may well seem to warrant is some kind of empirically grounded relativism. If there are alternative schemes of identification and classification embodied in different, sometimes untranslatable languages of color, each with its own standards of correct use and of truth and falsity internal to it, then it may well seem that no question of judging one scheme superior to another can even arise. For the only relevant standards of judgment are those embodied in each scheme. Someone living on the boundary between two radically different cultures with distinctively different languages of color may have to choose which of the two languages to speak, but this will be a choice of standards, not a choice guided by standards. Just this kind of relativistic conclusion is reached by George Lakoff,²³ yet it is the work which Lakoff and such predecessors as Berlin and Kay have done which perhaps undermines a relativist position.

For there is at least one language of colors which seems to receive insufficient attention from Lakoff: his own, that is, contemporary English. And his own language is distinctive, although not unique, in that he is able to translate into it—or, when necessary, to provide explanations which substitute for the work of translation—every language which provides him with his evidence for relativism. Lakoff may perhaps hold that this is irrelevant, since he asserts that the “translatability preserving truth conditions” of two or more languages does nothing to show that the “conceptual systems” to which they give expression are genuinely commensurable, if on any of four other criteria—especially perhaps that provided by the ability or inability of speakers of one language genuinely to understand those of another—those conceptual systems are incommensurable.²⁴ But this reply would miss the point, which is that what Lakoff through his combination of translation and explanation provides is not only a high degree of translatability, but also of understanding. That is to say, we can as users of the same language as Lakoff understand the uses and applications of the color vocabularies of certain languages the speakers of which lack resources necessary to understand our uses and applications of color words. The relationship of understanding is asymmetrical. Does this in itself show that our language and, to use Lakoff’s terminology, our conceptual scheme is superior to theirs? Not at all; for that to be the case we would also have to show that such understanding serves some good, which we can achieve, but of which those with certain types of limited color vocabulary are inevitably deprived.

Yet if this has to be shown might we not simply find ourselves recommitted to relativism, since on Lakoff’s criteria it might well appear that different conceptual systems exhibit incommensurable difference and diversity in respect of goods as well as in respect of colors and that by the standards of one such system, for example, that shared by Lakoff and his intended readers, this kind of superior understanding is accounted a good, while by the standards of some other such systems it is not so accounted (Lakoff himself of course says nothing about goods)?

It may well be that nothing can prevent the vindication of this conclusion if the facts of incommensurable difference and diversity are conceded *and* it is also allowed that the only standards to which anyone can appeal in judging what is a good and what is not are the standards embodied in the ordinary language of each particular group, the standards embodied in what Lakoff calls a conceptual system and I have called the language-in-use of a cultural and social order. But it is this latter contention which I now wish to deny.

IV

To what standards may we appeal against those of the particular cultural and social order which we happen to inhabit and whose language we happen to speak? To those of some practice or practices which have grown up within that order and developed to some significant degree its or their independent

evaluative standards. The concept of a practice upon which I am relying is that which I introduced in *After Virtue*:²⁵ practices are forms of systematic human activity, each with its own goods internal to it. Practices develop through time in directions dictated by the conceptions of achievement internal to each, the achievement both of the goods specific to each particular type of practice and of excellence in the pursuit of those goods. Examples of practices are the activities of games, arts, and scientific enquiries, as well as such productive activities as farming, fishing, and architecture. Practices which use, need, and extend vocabularies of color include a variety of natural scientific enquiries, the enquiries of comparative linguistics exemplified in Lakoff's work, and, almost unnoticed in the argument so far, painting. Practices often innovate linguistically and could not progress towards their goals without so doing. How in respect of colors do these innovations relate to the established language-in-use of whatever cultural and social order within which a particular practice is being carried on?

Established languages-in-use are not themselves static. I have so far followed Brent and Kay in speaking of 'the' color terms or 'the' color vocabulary used in some particular language. But their work is meant to teach us lessons about the historical development as well as about the diversity of such vocabularies. And it is clear from their accounts that within many languages-in-use color vocabularies have developed in remarkably uniform and systematic patterns, patterns which reflect the social use of discriminations made possible by the physics and neurophysiology of color vision. Doubtless changes in and the multiplication of discriminatory tasks promote such development in numerous ways. Brent and Kay note that "there appears to be a positive correlation between general cultural complexity (and/or level of technological development) and complexity of color vocabulary,"²⁶ although they are appropriately cautious about the imprecision of such notions as cultural complexity. One area—and Brent and Kay do not note this—in which such growing complexity is evidenced is in the relationship between the culture in general of some particular order and the development of a variety of practices, as the linguistic innovations required by those practices enrich or displace or otherwise transform the prior vocabularies of the general language-in-use. Consider the relationship of vocabularies of color to examples of the innovative needs of the practice of painting.

The examples to which I am going to appeal are drawn from the history of European painting, but this does not make it improper to speak of 'the' practice of painting. I could as easily have drawn upon the history of, say, Japanese painting. The criteria for the identity of practices are in important respects transcultural. Initially, of course, it is within each practice, as it is situated within some particular culture and as it is developed from the resources afforded by that particular culture, that criteria are developed for what is to be accounted an example of the practice or an extension of it, rather than a corruption or a violation. It was in the light afforded by such criteria that painters in renaissance Flanders and painters in renaissance Italy

accorded each other mutual recognition, learned from each other's innovations, and discovered in each other's achievements new standards to be surpassed. It was no different, even if more complex, when a good deal later Japanese painters discovered Western painting, and some time after that Western painters discovered Japanese art, each according to the other the same kind of recognition. It is from *within* the practice of painting in each case that shared standards are discovered which enable transcultural judgments of sameness and difference to be made, both about works of art and about the standards governing artistic practice and aesthetic evaluation. Identity of standards rooted in large similarities of practice provides on occasion common ground for those otherwise at home in very different cultures and societies. They thereby acquire a certain real, if limited, independence of their own social and cultural order. This does not mean that how a practice develops within a particular social and cultural order is not characteristically affected by other features of that order. Nonetheless insofar as a practice flourishes it always acquires a certain autonomy and has its own specific history upon which it draws in developing an institutionalized tradition into which its practitioners are initiated. What those practitioners have to learn are the standards of judgment specific to that particular form of enquiry, including the standards to which appeal is made in reformulating those standards. It is through this learning that abilities to discover, and to justify claims in respect of, new truths and to correct our understanding of what has been hitherto accepted as true are acquired. The acquisition of such abilities and of criteria which enable us to distinguish those who possess them and those who do not is a precondition for according the status of objectivity to the judgments of a practice and the possession of such abilities in painting is characteristically expressed in part in powers of color discrimination.

Wittgenstein asked "Mightn't shiny black and matt black have different colour-names?" (*Remarks on Colour* III, 152). Van Gogh wrote to his brother: "Frans Hals has no less than twenty-seven blacks." Only someone who needed to learn from Hals how to see what Hals saw, by discrimination and attention of the same order, and how to represent as Hals represented, either so as herself or himself to paint or so as to look at paintings with the painter's eye, would so need to distinguish. And if there were a sufficient number of such people engaged in communicating their visual observations, so as to educate themselves further, then they would need an enlarged color vocabulary, with perhaps twenty-seven names for different blacks.

What type of color vocabulary painters need and the range of uses to which they put that vocabulary depends in part upon the tasks specific to different periods of painting. Wittgenstein doubted "that Goethe's remarks about the character of the colours could be of any use to a painter" (*Remarks on Colour*, III, 90). But Turner not only towards the end of his life developed the theoretical conceptions of color, which he had both expounded in his Royal Academy Lectures and put to work in his own paintings, into a critique of Goethe's account, but also produced a visual critique of Goethe's theory in his

paintings exhibited in 1843 *Shade and Darkness: the Evening of the Deluge* and *Light and Colour (Goethe's Theory): The Morning after the Deluge Moses writing the Book of Genesis*. Turner had read Eastlake's translation of Goethe in 1840, but he had moved in circles in which Goethe's theory was familiar much earlier, and we can see in the paintings how thinking and talking about colors informed Turner's practice.

Turner's most basic quarrel with Goethe was with the latter's treatment of darkness as nothing but the absence of light (*Farbentheorie* 744). Goethe's thesis that colors are shadows evoked a comment on the margins of Turner's copy of Eastlake: "nothing about shadow or Shade as Shade and Shadow Pictorially or optically."²⁷ What matters for my present argument is neither the detail of Turner's productive disagreements with Goethe nor who was right, but only that, in developing his own reflections both on the merits and demerits of various paintings and on the natural world represented in his paintings, as an integral part of his own practice of painting, Turner had to develop an understanding of colors in relation to light and darkness, which required the identification of a range of colors and hues, which could not have been achieved without an extended color vocabulary. Not all the discriminations required that there be names for every distinct shade; Turner's range of yellows, for example, outran the then vocabulary of color. But the use of names played an essential part in Turner's reflections. As they did, too, with such later reflective painters as Signac and Mondrian.

There are cultures which are not, as they stand or stood, open to the possibilities disclosed by excellence of achievement in painting, whether that painting is European, Japanese, or whatever. And what debars the inhabitants of such cultures from openness to those possibilities is in part the standards of discrimination embodied in too meagre a vocabulary of colors. Of course the achievement of an enriched and sophisticated vocabulary of colors as part, although only part, of the resources needed for the color discrimination of great painting is always partly the result of the impact of a practice such as painting upon the language-in-use of a particular social and cultural order, rather than its cause. Nonetheless too impoverished a set of practices of discrimination, expressed in a severely limited vocabulary, are signs of a lack of possibility. So the inhabitants of a culture may have to come to recognize that from the standpoint of the goods and excellences achievable only in and through some particular type of practice their culture as it has existed hitherto has to be judged as inadequate relative to certain others. Or they may be unable to recognize this, because their culture cannot for some reason accommodate that particular type of practice. Or again acquaintance with the practice might lead them to deny, from their external point of view, that the goods of the practice can be genuine goods and to exclude the practice from their culture, as representational art has been deliberately and altogether excluded from some cultures.²⁸ Yet from the standpoint afforded by the practice such a culture will be impoverished. It is perhaps in the capacity to recognize the poverties and defects of one's own culture and to move, so far as is possible, towards remedying it, without in the

process discarding that culture in its integrity, that the greatness of a social and cultural order is shown.

Relativism about social and cultural orders thus fails, insofar as the standards provided by practices, such as the practice of painting, can be brought to bear upon their evaluation. The languages-in-use of some social and cultural orders *are* more adequate than those of some others in this or that respect; the vocabularies of color of some social and cultural orders are more adequate than those of some others in respect of the tasks of color discrimination set by the practice of painting. It is not that the color judgments made by the inhabitants of such orders fail in respect of truth, but that the conceptual scheme informing those judgments is inadequate to the realities of color disclosed by the practice of painting and also perhaps to those disclosed by scientific and philosophical enquiries into the nature of color.

There is thus after all a possibility of dissenting from the established linguistic consensus regarding color in our own social and cultural order and the constraints which it imposes upon our judgments of color, not through the kind of idiosyncrasies of linguistic use involved in an individual's using her or his own color words in her or his own way, but through resort to the standards of adequacy and inadequacy provided by the institutionalized norms of some practice. We can of course become aware of the contingency of any particular color vocabulary and of the variety of ways in which it might have been other than it is merely by becoming aware of the range of diversity to be found in different social and cultural orders. But that awareness in itself provides no good reason for judging one vocabulary, or conceptual scheme partially expressed through a vocabulary, superior to another. It is from the standpoint and only from the standpoint afforded by and internal to practices, such as the practice of painting, that questions about the adequacy or inadequacy of such vocabularies and conceptual schemes can be intelligibly posed, let alone answered. And of course what those who participate in the relevant practice characteristically seek to produce, if they radically put in question the vocabulary and conceptual scheme of their own culture, is the achievement of some new consensus with its own new set of constraints upon linguistic use and upon judgment.

Notes

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1. See my "The Intelligibility of Action" and Amélie O. Rorty's "How to Interpret Actions" in *Rationality, Relativism, and the Human Sciences*, edited by J. Margolis, M. Krausz, and R. M. Burian (Dordrecht, 1986).

2. Colin McGinn, *Wittgenstein on Meaning* (Oxford, 1984), 81.

3. *Ibid.*, 78.

4. *Ibid.*, 79.

5. *Ibid.*, 133.

6. *Ibid.*, 196–97.

7. Norman Malcolm, *Wittgenstein: Nothing Is Hidden* (Oxford, 1986), 176–78.

8. *Ibid.*, 178.

9. McGinn, *Wittgenstein on Meaning*, 194–97.

10. Malcolm, *Nothing Is Hidden*, 176–78.
11. McGinn, *Wittgenstein on Meaning*, 197.
12. David Pears, *The False Prison*, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1988), 368–69.
13. McGinn, *Wittgenstein on Meaning*, 80.
14. Malcolm, *Nothing Is Hidden*, 382.
15. Jonathan Westphal, *Colour* (Oxford, 1987), 80–81.
16. For how far this is so see not only Westphal, *Colour*, but also C. L. Hardin, *Color for Philosophers* (Indianapolis, 1988), esp. 155–86.
17. Brent Berlin and Paul Kay, *Basic Color Terms* (Berkeley, 1969), 46–47.
18. Paul Kay and Willett Kempton, “What is the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis?” *American Anthropologist* 86 (1984): 65–79.
19. Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, translated by R. Nice (Cambridge, 1977), 226.
20. Ibid.
21. My argument follows closely that of George Lakoff in *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things* (Chicago, 1987).
22. See for a summary of the relevant empirical findings Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things*, 26–30; for the most important items in the literature summarized see Paul Kay and Chad McDaniel, “The Linguistic Significance of the Meaning of Color Terms,” *Language* 54, no. 3 (1978): 610–46, and Robert MacLaury, “Color Categories in Mesoamerica: A Cross-Linguistic Study,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Berkeley.
23. Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things*, 334–37.
24. Ibid., 336.
25. *After Virtue*, 2d. ed. (Notre Dame, Ind., 1984), 187–91.
26. Brent and Kay, *Basic Color Terms*, 16.
27. John Gage, *Color in Turner* (London, 1969), 178; for a cogent contemporary development of Goethe’s thesis which resolves the puzzles about particular colors posed by Wittgenstein in the *Remarks of Colour*, see Westphal, *Colour*.
28. I owe this example to Philip Quinn.