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Hamann's Influence on Wittgenstein

Abstract

This paper examines Johann Georg Hamann's influence on Ludwig Wittgenstein's late philosophy. Wittgenstein's letters, diaries and Drury's memoirs show that Wittgenstein discussed Hamann's authorship in the early 1930s and 1950s. Wittgenstein's diary notes and the Cambridge lectures show that Wittgenstein's discussion of Hamann's views in 1931 corresponds to adopting a view of harmony of language and reality that resembles Hamann's. Using Hamann's view of language as an intertwining of signs, objects and meanings in use as a point of comparison for reading Wittgenstein reveals an overlap in their philosophies. The harmony of language and reality takes place in communicative use, so non-communicative private languages and pre-linguistic ideal forms of representation are not possible. Language is a free response to reality, and it involves belief-systems and trust.

Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951) stands in the tradition of German linguistic philosophy and Viennese philosophy, where the issues of logic, linguistic philosophy, ethics and religion are interrelated (Janik & Toulmin 1973; Glock 2015). Johann Georg Hamann (1730–1788) is a Christian thinker who started the first linguistic turn in philosophy and the German linguistic tradition with his *Metakritik* of Kant's philosophy (see Bayer 2002; Dickson 1995; Betz 2009). John Betz (2005, 291–292) even argues that "Hamann is to be credited with the ideas typically attributed to the late Wittgenstein". In this paper I investigate Hamann's influence on Wittgenstein. I show the following:

1. Wittgenstein referred to Hamannian themes and to Hamann's authorship in 1930–31 and 1951.

2. Wittgenstein discussed and was inspired by the key Hamannian themes of divine language and an epistemology of faith. Wittgenstein developed a view of harmony of language and reality resembling Hamann's in 1931.

3. Using Hamann's view of language as a point of comparison for interpreting Wittgenstein reveals an important systematic overlap in their views. Language consists of signs, practices of use and a meaning that is intertwined with the sign and the object through use. Use is communicative and concrete, so private psychological languages and pseudo-mathematical ideal languages are not possible. Language is a free response to reality, and it is based on trust.

The philosophical point of highlighting the overlaps between Hamann and Wittgenstein is to bring their common approaches into focus, in order to offer resources for new starting-points in systematic philosophy. There are several thematically overlapping discussions of connections between Hamann and Wittgenstein. I will first present the most important contributions to highlight the themes that arise from the discussions and the similarities and contrasts between the different contributions. I then use them as background material for my own discussion, which is probably closest to Helmut Hein's comparison (1983). These discussions feature the themes of communicative action, religion, the critique of Enlightenment philosophy and the possibility of an influence of Hamann on Wittgenstein.

Charles Taylor (1985) and Martin Kusch (2011) argue that both thinkers stand in an expressivist tradition. Taylor argues that language is expressive and communicative action, and language-use is primary to the functions of language and reason. Language forms human concerns, values and conceptual rules, and constitutes a public space for a language community. Kusch connects the communicative role of language with religion and theological grammar. He compares Wittgenstein's grammar quote (PI: §373)[1]

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[1] "Grammar tells what kind of object anything is. (Theology as grammar.)"

with Hamann's (N II: 129; ZH 7: 169).[2] Kusch argues that theological grammar describes how religious practices and the communication between God and the believer work. Both Hamann and Wittgenstein argue that pictures are indispensable for divine-human relationships, because they are used in religious language-games. These interpretations, then, locate Hamann and Wittgenstein in a tradition that emphasizes communicative practices as a basis of language, reason and sociality, and emphasizes the use of symbols in communicative practices.

The overlap of religion and language is another common theme in the literature discussing the relationship between Wittgenstein and Hamann. Kusch's work (2011) falls into this category as well, as he argues that Hamann's view of the Bible as constituting the divine-human relationship offers a background for Wittgenstein's views on grammar. Regine Munz (2000) argues that Wittgenstein used religious themes and arguments as examples of linguistic communication during his middle period of 1929–37. The religious examples forge a link between language and religion. Religion is a paradox that can be understood through analysis of religious symbols, which also sheds light on language. Linguistic symbols function like religious and magical rituals, because rituals are instituted. The meaning of an expression is its social spirit, which must be shared with its hearer in order for a specific speech-act to make sense.

Tim Labron (2009) also compares Wittgenstein's late philosophy with Chalcedonian Christology, which holds that the human and divine are intertwined. Social language-games similarly reveal logic and have logical properties, but at the same time logic receives social properties. The parallelism between Hamann's concept of divine language and language-games also arises in Hein (1983), who argues that Hamann uses the metaphor of the divine Word to emphasize

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[2] "[I]t was a theologian of penetrating wit who pronounced theology, – the oldest sister of the highest sciences, – to be a grammar of the language of Holy Writ" (N II: 129 = H: 22). "Do you understand my principle that *reason is linguistic* and that I follow Luther in making all of philosophy into a *grammar*" (ZH 7: 169).
I refer to Hamann's and Wittgenstein's published writings by using abbreviations that are explained in the bibliography. I have translated the Hamann quotations myself using Haynes', Betz's and Dickson's translations as a background, unless I quote them directly.

that a sign, its object and meaning are united. Wittgenstein develops the concept of language-games (PI: §23) to emphasize the intertwining of signs and objects, senses and reason in language-use.

The third theme that arises often in comparisons of Hamann and Wittgenstein is their critique of the Enlightenment. Jonathan Gray (2012) and Gwen Griffith-Dickson (1995: 311–318) argue that Wittgenstein and Hamann criticize the philosophical tendency to abstract words from ordinary language, to attempt to construct ideal languages and then identify the ideal concepts with reality itself, thus "taking *words* for *concepts* and *concepts* for *things*" (ZH 5: 264). Hamann and Wittgenstein emphasize that language can be used as a key to solve philosophical problems by paying attention to ordinary language-use. Gray emphasizes Nietzsche-style genealogy and creative language-use, whereas Dickson argues that locating language in its lived relationships is a key to overcoming philosophical confusions. Hein argues that Hamann and Wittgenstein "have common opponents, common goals and use similar 'strategies'" (1983: 22). They criticize the Enlightenment's conceptual gaps senses/reason, subject/object, mind/world, reason/feeling and theory/practice by developing a view of "sensuous reason" that is located in language. Both reject the existence of an ideal foundation outside the world. Knowledge is based on belief-systems and faith, which is trust in and recognition of present reality. Labron (2009) similarly argues that the concept of language-games overcomes the conceptual gaps and skeptical problems of modern philosophy.

These discussions point to the possibility of Hamann influencing Wittgenstein. Gray (2012) argues that Wittgenstein could have known Hamann through Fritz Mauthner (1849–1923) or Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855). Kusch proposes that Wittgenstein got Martin Luther's (1483–1548) view of theology as a grammar from Hamann or somebody discussing Hamann's views, because Hamann, as noted, uses similar language about theological grammar as Wittgenstein. In fact, Mauthner used Hamann's grammar quote as a motto of his critique of language (ZH 7: 169; H: xiii, n. 6). Munz (2000) points out that Wittgenstein discussed Kierkegaard's views in 1931, and Hamann's views on 22.2.1931 (DB: 40). She argues that these discussions (DB: 40–43, 64–66) show that Wittgenstein viewed

religious symbols as paradoxes. She then argues that Wittgenstein used the story of the wedding of Cana (DB: 46, 6.5.1931) as an example of a religious paradox in need of a symbolic analysis. Wittgenstein's analysis shows that religious and linguistic symbols contain their meaning in themselves, and the meaning is a spirit that is formed in the interplay between the actor, the communicative act and its receiver (cf. ZH 5: 272; Dickson 1995: 338).

1. Wittgenstein and Hamann's Authorship

Wittgenstein discusses Hamann in conversations, diary entries and letters. Wittgenstein mentioned Hamann to Maurice O'Connor Drury in a conversation in 1930:

> I have been reading in a German author, a contemporary of Kant's, Hamann, where he says, commenting on the story of the Fall in Genesis: 'How like God to wait until the cool of the evening before confronting Adam with his transgression.' Now I would not for the life of me dare to say, 'how like God.' I wouldn't claim to know how God should act. Do you understand Hamann's remark? Tell me what you think – I would really like to know. (Drury 1981: 122)

Wittgenstein discusses Hamann again in a diary remark on 22.2.1931:

> Hamann sieht Gott wie einen Teil der Natur an & zugleich wie die Natur.
>
> Und ist damit nicht das religiöse Paradox ausgedrückt: "Wie kann die Natur ein Teil der Natur sein?"
>
> […]
>
> Der Verkehr mit Autoren wie Hamann, Kierkegaard macht ihre Herausgeber anmaßend. Diese Versuchung würde der Herausgeber der Cherubinischen Wandersmannes nie <u>fühlen</u> noch auch der Confessionen der Augustin oder einer Schrift Luthers.
>
> Es ist wohl, daß die <u>Ironie</u> eines Autors den Leser anmaßend zu machen <u>geneigt ist</u>.
>
> Es ist dann etwa so: sie sagen sie wissen daß sie nichts wissen bilden sich aber auf diese Erkenntnis enorm viel ein. (DB: 40–41)

Wittgenstein also referred to Hamann in a letter to Rush Rhees on 14.3.1951. In the letter, Wittgenstein writes:

> The books I have read recently were: "Studies in Classic American Literature" by D.H. Lawrence [...] some Hamann (which is terribly difficult for me), "Moby Dick" [...] bits of the Old Testament, "Rommel" by Brigadier Young [...]. (McGuinness 2008: 475)

The letters were edited by Brian McGuinness, who writes in a footnote that Ludwig Hänsel sent the second volume of Hamann's collected works (N II) to Wittgenstein in 1950 as a Christmas present. Wittgenstein again found Hamann difficult to understand, just like in 1930–31.

Wittgenstein alludes to two Hamannian themes in these references. One is Hamann's view of divine language, which he sees as a paradox. The other is Hamann's view of Socratic ignorance and knowledge that is based on faith (see Betz 2009: 82–84). One can draw different conclusions from these references. The weakest conclusion is that Wittgenstein discussed themes in Hamann's writings and he could have known these themes e.g. through Mauthner and Kierkegaard (see Gray 2012). The strongest is that Wittgenstein read Hamann at least in 1930–31 and 1950–51.

One should note three points. First, Wittgenstein comments the reception of Hamann's authorship by claiming that Hamann's editors are treating his writings arrogantly, as Hamann's style of communication is ironic and indirect (see Betz 2009: 8–17, 68–71; Dickson 1995: 25–27). Wittgenstein is comparing Hamann's style of writing and his indirect style of authorship with other authors, e.g. Luther. Commenting on Hamann's authorship requires at least an acquaintance with his main themes and with his style. It also requires that Hamann has made an impression on Wittgenstein. Second, one can ask, what "reading in" means here. Ordinarily, saying "I read it in the newspaper" implies that one read the newspaper. One could, however, claim that it is possible that Wittgenstein used Hamann as an inspiration without directly reading him.[3] This possibility however requires that Wittgenstein read Hamann via a second-hand source and picked up themes in Hamann. Third, one cannot dispute that Wittgenstein read Hamann in 1950–51, as he directly says that he did so (McGuinness 2008: 473). There is then at least a strong possibility

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[3] As was suggested by an anonymous reviewer of this paper.

that Wittgenstein read Hamann in 1930–31 and 1950–51. In any case, one can draw the conclusion that Wittgenstein was at least acquainted with Hamann's main themes and his style of authorship in both 1930–31 and 1950–51.

Wittgenstein, then, discussed the theme of divine language in Hamann in 1931, when he was formulating his views of the harmony of language and reality (DB: 40; Baker & Hacker 1985: 81–91). Hamann expresses a core idea of his philosophy of language by using the metaphor of a sacrament:

> What transcendental philosophy is vainly fishing for with its long writings, I have pointed to the sacrament of language for the sake of the weak reader, the letters as its elements and the spirit of its institution. (N III: 289; cf. H: 217–218)

Bayer (2002) argues that Hamann uses the Lutheran doctrine of sacraments as the model for the union of rational concepts and sensible objects in language. According to Luther, a sacrament is constituted by elements like bread and wine and the words of institution like "This is my body". The words of institution consti-tute a use for the physical elements in the context of God's covenant with man, which is not dependent on human response. Then Christ and God's grace are present in the physical elements, because the elements have a use in the communicative relationship of man and God. Luther puts this clearly: "The spirit consists in the use, not the object" (LW 37, 92). A sacrament then consists of three parts:

1. Elements: a physical sign like bread and wine.

2. Institution: a rule for symbolic use that is based on Jesus' words like "This is my body".

3. Divine presence against the background of a relationship: God's grace is present due to the use of the signs in the relationship of God's covenants with man.

Luther's use theory of theological language is also directed against the Augustinian view of language. Bayer (1991: 36–39) argues that Luther reached his theological breakthrough when he realized that theological language consists fundamentally of speech acts and linguistic action (see Green 2014; Bayer 2002: 9–17; cf. RF), so reference is not foundational to it. Expressions like "I absolve you

of your sins!" do not refer to a separate absolution, but they instead accomplish and communicate it. Theological language is therefore fundamentally communicative, and sign and its object go together in communicative use.

Hamann takes this picture and uses it straightforwardly to interpret language-use and divine presence in nature (Bayer 2002: 374–396). I interpret Hamann by applying the sacramental metaphor to Wittgenstein's example (PI: §197). Language consists of word-signs like "Let's play a game of chess!" and the institution of language-use, like the practices of playing chess. The word-signs are the elements of language. These elements are by themselves just sensuous and material sounds, ink-spots and dead non-words. They

> only become definite objects for the understanding through their institution of meaning in use. It is well known that this meaning and its determination consists of the combination of an *a priori* arbitrary but *a posteriori* necessary word-sign with the intuition of an object. The concept of an object is then given to, stamped upon and made concrete for the understanding through this repeated band mediated both by the word-sign and the intuition of the object. (N III: 288; cf. H: 216)

The institutions of language-use then connect the words "Let's play a game of chess!" with intuitions of chess. Hamann takes basic intuitions to be practices like playing music and painting. He argues that Kantian forms of intuition like space and time are symbolic forms of sensuously mediated bodily practices:

> the oldest language was music, and the felt rhythm […] and breathing of the nose is the bodily archetypical picture for *measuring time* and its numerical relationships. (N III: 286; cf. H: 211)

Basic intuitions are thus sensuous and bodily practices (Bayer 2002: 329–336). The institution of practices of language-use in playing chess connects the words "Let's play a game of chess!" with basic intuitions of the game of chess like moving pieces, following the rules of chess and making plans. This institution gives the word-sign "let's play a game of chess!" a use through connecting it with playing chess and following its rules through the repeated band of regular use in practices. The meaning of the words "Let's play a game of chess!" is then mediated for the understanding through the use of word-signs in practical relationships.

This is also Hamann's answer to the problem of the harmony of language and reality, or how rational and linguistic concepts can be used of real empirical objects. Since use connects the meaning of the words "Let's play a game of chess!" with the words themselves and the words with chess-pieces and practices of playing chess and following its rules, it connects the meaning of the words "Let's play a game of chess!" with their objects, like the rules of chess and chess-pieces. The triadic relationship between signs, objects and meanings only takes place in relationships of action and communication, or forms of life: "The 'combination' and the 'band' of this triad is a living one only inside specific forms of language and life" (Bayer 2002: 387; cf. PI: §§197, 431–432). Hamann's metaphor of sacramental language thus interprets language in terms of elements, institutions and relationships:

1. Elements: word-signs and expressions like the sentence "Let's play a game of chess!"

2. Institution: regular use connecting the words "Let's play a game of chess!" with bodily practices like moving pieces, following rules, making plans and playing chess.

3. Objectivity of concepts against the background of forms of life: Concepts are delivered to the understanding and connected to objects through regular use in linguistic practices and forms of life.

Hamann, then, developed views that at least foreshadowed Wittgenstein's later work (Betz 2004: 291–292). Bayer also shows that the definition of sacramental language corresponds to Hamann's view of divine presence in nature (2002: 389–393; see DB: 40). Hamann expresses his view of the relationship between God and nature in the slogan: "*Speak, that I may see you* – This wish was fulfilled by creation, which is a speech to creatures through creatures" (H: 65/N II: 198; see also N III: 32/H: 108–109). The slogan is a formulation of the Christian doctrine of creation. The world is divine communication or an address, which is mediated through creation as a whole and Jesus Christ. Nature is a book, which has an Author and a reader (cf. Munz 2000: 132). Nature is, then, involved in an exchange of words with God. The phrase "to creatures" means that human beings and Nature as a whole are responding to an Other, who is not reduced to nature and who is free to act. The phrase "through creatures"

means that God enters the world in Jesus Christ, and His words are mediated by physical facts and entities. Divine language binds signs, meanings and objects together. Divine language consists of elements, institutions and divine ideas. The relationships of creation are the institutions of divine language, which determine the roles and the "use" of creatures in the drama of reality. Creatures are the elements of the speech, because they mediate creaturely relationships and God's speech (Bayer 2012: 72–78; see also Bayer 2002; Dickson 1995). I'll again use an example from Wittgenstein (CV: 51–52) to illustrate Hamann's view of divine language:[4]

1. Elements: a phenomenon of nature, e.g. trees bowing to a saint.

2. Institution: the phenomenon has a use in a communicative exchange between creatures and God, as the saint exchanges words with his hearers and God, and God uses the phenomenon as a symbolic gesture of validating the words of the saint.

3. Symbolizing divine ideas in a communicative relationship: the trees symbolize the divine idea of validating the saint, because the phenomena are used as a gesture in communication between the saint, the hearers and God.

2. Wittgenstein, Hamann and Rule-Following in 1929–31

The parallelism between Hamann's and Wittgenstein's views of language then raises the question: is it possible to show a direct influence? The question is difficult because of the nature of Hamann's influence and Wittgenstein's style of using his sources. Betz describes Hamann's influence as a black hole: it cannot be seen, but it pulls authors to its orbit (2009: 14–15). Wittgenstein famously describes his philosophical style as reproductive: he takes up themes

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[4] A miracle is, as it were, a *gesture* which God makes. As a man sits quietly & then makes an impressive gesture, God lets the world run on smoothly & then accompanies the words of a Saint by a symbolic occurrence, a gesture of nature. It would be an instance if, when a saint has spoken, the trees around him bowed, as if in reverence.—Now, do I believe that this happens? I don't.

The only way for me to believe in a miracle in this sense would be to be *impressed* by an occurrence in this particular way. So that I should say e.g.: "It was *impossible* to see these trees & not to feel that they were responding to the words." (CV: 51; cf. DB: 46-47)

and inspiration from others, and his originality is in the soil his thinking offers for the seeds taken from other thinkers (CV: 16, 42; cf. Janik and Toulmin 1973: 22–24). It will then be very difficult to directly observe Hamann's influence on Wittgenstein, as Wittgenstein discusses the ideas of other thinkers by internalizing them into his own work, and Hamann's influence can only be traced through similarities.

Allan Janik's and Stephen Toulmin's book *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (1973) offers methodological leads for discussing Wittgenstein's use of his sources. They argue that Wittgenstein's receptive thinking style means that he takes up problems and ideas in his intellectual milieu, and then synthetizes and approaches them in novel ways. Moreover, Wittgenstein's work is located in a tradition that connects the critique of language with wider religious and ethical issues. Furthermore, it is possible to locate his works in philosophical (e.g. Kantian and Kierkegaardian) traditions by pointing out broad similarities. Toulmin's and Janik's discussion can also be complemented by Roy Bhaskar's critical realism (2008): once one has noted a pattern of phenomena and explained them, one can propose a causal mechanism producing them. It thus becomes possible to point out Hamann's influence on Wittgenstein by first identifying the themes that Wittgenstein took up from Hamann, identifying a systematic overlap between their philosophies, and reconstructing the process of argument that Wittgenstein used to develop the Hamannian ideas and themes.

Wittgenstein famously got an impulse for looking at philosophical problems from a new perspective, when Piero Sraffa had refuted the picture theory's appeal to ideal logical form soon after Wittgenstein returned to Cambridge (i.e. 1929–1930). Sraffa had shown an Italian gesture that means "Nonsense!" to Wittgenstein and then asked what the logical form of the gesture is. Wittgenstein felt like a pruned tree: the dead branches of the picture theory had been cut, and he could approach the problems of rule-following and the harmony of language and reality from a new perspective (Monk 1991, 260–261).

At the same time, Wittgenstein also discussed writers on religion like James George Frazer (1854–1941), Kierkegaard and Hamann.

His discussions intertwine the themes of religion, anthropology and language in a nexus that is typical for his philosophy of language (Janik and Toulmin 1973; Munz 2000). He refers to Hamann's theory of divine language, which corresponds to Hamann's views on the harmony of language and reality (Bayer 2002: 389–393). Wittgenstein first took it to be a paradox in February 1931, but then applied it to interpret the Cana miracle story on 6.5.1931 (DB 40: 46–47). During 1930–32, Wittgenstein developed a view on the harmony of language and reality that resembles Hamann's, as can be seen from his Cambridge Lectures (LWL) and PI §§431–432 (see Baker & Hacker 1985).

Wittgenstein's development in 1930–31 can then be approached with Lev Vygotsky's theory of double stimulation. Developing new concepts and models of solving problems has two requirements. The subject must be presented with a problem that cannot be solved with the means he can use. He must also be offered a way of solving it with a fresh strategy for synthetizing concepts, experience and solving problems (Vygotsky 1962: 56–59). Janik and Toulmin argue (1973: 224–230) that Wittgenstein's view of language-games is a product of a process that starts from the question of the possibility of linguistic representation, religious questions and the interplay between these two. I furthermore argue that it took an anthropological turn from Sraffa's critique, which showed the inadequacy of the picture theory, and that religious themes like Hamann's view of divine language offered inspiration for a new anthropological, practice- and communication-oriented starting-points for approaching language (cf. Monk 1991: 260–261; Munz 2000).

Here one has to connect the Hamannian themes with Wittgenstein's reading of Frazer's *Golden Bough* (RF). Munz (2000) discusses Wittgenstein's reply to Frazer at length. Frazer argues that magic is based on loose associations that lead to erroneous views on causation. According to Munz, Wittgenstein holds that the distinction between beliefs and practices cannot be made, as language is at its core mythological. She argues that Wittgenstein applies the view that meaning is use to religious language, where mythical rituals and their meanings are intertwined. I argue that

Wittgenstein offers the harmony of a wish and its fulfillment in communication as a counter-model for religious language and uses it to criticize Frazer's attempts to debunk religion. Religious rituals must be understood as expressive communication. Magic, religion and language are based on symbolism, as the harmony of language and reality takes place in the symbol. A religious ritual like a rain-dance symbolically represents and mythologically enacts the connection between a wish and its fulfillment, and Wittgenstein mentions sacraments like baptism in this context (RF: 125). All language is similarly symbolic and ceremonial at its core and cannot be separated from mythology.

Wittgenstein's discussions of Frazer's view of religious symbols are analogous to his discussion of Hamann and the relationship between God and the world on 22.2.1931: How can God be a part of God, if God is like nature and a part of it (DB: 40)? Munz (2000: 129–131) argues that Wittgenstein first interprets Hamann's ideas as a Russell-type paradox of signs and their objects in light of the logical problems he was discussing in his lectures: how God∈God? Wittgenstein then uses Kierkegaard to interpret religious symbols as paradoxes that express a higher truth. I argue that Wittgenstein discusses Hamann's view of Divine Presence in nature: God is like nature and a part of nature, so God is present in nature. The position Wittgenstein is here discussing is Hamann's view of the language of God, which corresponds to Hamann's sacramental or ritualistic view of language. It also plays a similar role in Hamann's metacritique as the concept of language-games does in Wittgenstein (see Hein 1983).

Wittgenstein found Hamann and his theological ideas difficult to understand in 1930 and 1951 (see Drury 1981: 122; McGuinness 2008: 475), so he saw Hamann's view of Divine Presence as a paradoxical riddle in 1931 as well. Here Wittgenstein interprets divine presence in terms of a part-whole relationship and the divine as a Deus sive Natura, so he interprets Hamann to raise the para-doxical possibility that God is a part of God. The Spinozist God thus "does not reveal himself *in* the world" (TLP: 6.432; see Garver 1994: 133–145; TLP: 6.44–45). Wittgenstein however returned to the theme of the self-revelation of God in nature and history when discussing the miracles of Jesus in a diary entry on 6.5.1931 (cf. CV:

52–53). We can ask, does Wittgenstein offer a Hamannian model of miracles and divine revelation in nature by interpreting them as "speech to creatures through creatures"? I argue that he does:

> Wenn man Wunder Christi etwa das Wunder auf der Hochzeit zu Kana so verstehen will wie Dostojewski es tat, dann muß man sie als Symbole auffassen. Die Verwandlung von Wasser in Wein ist höchstens erstaunlich & wer es könnte würden wir anstaunen aber mehr nicht. Es kann also nicht das das Herrliche sein. [...] Es muß das Wunderbare sein das dieser Handlung ihren Inhalt & ihre Bedeutung gibt. Und damit meine ich nicht das Außergewöhnliche, oder noch nie die Dagewesene, sondern den Geist in dem es getan wird und für den die Verwandlung von Wasser in Wein nur ein Symbol ist (gleichsam) eine Geste. [...] Als Geste, als Ausdruck muß das Wunder verstanden werden, wenn es zu uns reden soll. Ich könnte auch sagen: Nur wenn er es tut in einem wunderbaren Geist es tut ist es ein Wunder. Ohne diesen Geist ist es nur eine außerordentlich seltsame Tatsache. (DB: 46)

Munz's (2000: 131–133) interpretation is that the miraculous is constituted by the communication between the actor, the act and the reception (cf. Bayer 2012: 72–74). The miraculous is the spirit of the act of performing the miracle, and the spirit constitutes the gesture. Understanding a miracle requires sharing its communicative spirit. Wittgenstein thus applied symbolic analysis to religious signs to reach the conclusion that a linguistic symbol and its meaning are intertwined. I argue that Wittgenstein's interpretation of the miracle resembles Hamann's theory of divine language. The extraordinary facts are not miraculous as such. The miracle instead consists in the spirit of the symbolic act, which arises out of the acts of the person who is using the extraordinary facts as a gesture to address the guests. The physical facts of a miracle are thus a symbol that mediate its spirit. That is, the physical facts make the divine spirit present by functioning as divine communication between God, the natural phenomena and the wedding guests. The miracle is thus interpreted as a Hamannian language of God:

1. Elements: extraordinary physical facts like turning water into wine.

2. Institution: Jesus uses the extraordinary physical facts as a gesture to address creatures.

3. Symbolization of the miraculous: the extraordinary facts and their use as a speech-act constitute a symbol of the miraculous spirit in

> the communicative relationship between God, the phenomena and
> the onlookers who are addressed through it.

Wittgenstein thus acquired a practical grasp of Hamann's view of divine language during the spring of 1931. Accordingly, Wittgenstein had the option of interpreting the harmony of language and reality in Hamannian terms from the spring of 1931 onwards, because Hamann's views of divine language and of the harmony of language and reality correspond to each other. Lecture notes made during the Lent Term of January–March 1931 point to the possibility that Wittgenstein indeed took the option:

> Instead, give a description of symbols, or rather of *signs*. What we describe is the signs. The sign plus the rules of grammar applying to it is all we need. We need nothing further to make the connection with reality. [...] The grammatical rules applying to it determine the meaning of the word. Its meaning is not something else, some object to which it corresponds or does not correspond. The word carries its meaning with it; it has a grammatical body behind it, so to speak. Its meaning cannot be something else which may not be known. It does not carry its grammatical rules with it. They describe its usage subsequently. (LWL: 58–59)

These notes from 9.3.1931 point to an understanding of rule-following that resembles Hamann's view of language. Language is composed of the elements of signs and the institutions of grammatical rules of language-use. Together they intertwine the word with its meaning to form a symbol, and thus connect the meaning with reality. We can then conclude that Wittgenstein developed his views on the harmony of language and reality in a dialogue with Hamannian themes after Sraffa had refuted the picture theory. Wittgenstein also proposed a Hamannian answer to the problem in the spring of 1931.

3. Hamann and Wittgenstein: Overlapping Views

Wittgenstein can then be interpreted in light of his reception of Hamann's ideas in 1931, by using Hamann as a point of comparison. The significance of the comparisons depends on one's paradigm for interpreting Wittgenstein's late philosophy. The Baker & Hacker (1980, 1985; see also Appelqvist 2007) interpretation allows one to

read Wittgenstein in light of the comparison, as it interprets Wittgenstein's later philosophy in terms of rule-following and dates Wittgenstein's turn to his later philosophy to 1930–32. One can also account for the Hamannian themes in Wittgenstein's late philosophy in dialectical and polyphonic accounts (Wallgren 2006; Baker 2004). A polyphonic interpretation of Wittgenstein can include the claim that Wittgenstein developed a Hamannian view of the harmony of language and reality in 1931 and an epistemology of faith in 1951, and offers them as a dialectical alternative to the Augustinian picture (PI: §2) and the rationalism of the philosophical tradition.

One should also note that Wittgenstein's views on rule-following developed over the years, as he moved from a view of language-games as calculi with fixed rules to a view that interprets rules in terms of the harmony of language and reality in use (Baker & Hacker 1980; Stern 1995). However, the parallelism between Hamann and Wittgenstein concerns the harmony of language and reality, while the relationships of rules and use in the institutions of language may be left fluid. Baker and Hacker (1985: 81–91) argue that Wittgenstein's view on rule-following (PI: §197) is to be understood against the background of his discussions of the harmony of language and reality in 1930–32, and that PI §§431–432 originate from these discussions:

> "There is a gulf between an order and its execution. It has to be filled by the act of understanding."

> "Only in the act of understanding is it meant that we are to do THIS. The *order*—why, that is nothing but sounds, ink-marks.—"

> Every sign *by itself* seems dead. *What* gives it life?—In use it is *alive*. Is life breathed into it there?—Or is the *use* its life? (PI: §§431–432)

I straightforwardly use Hamann's metaphor of language as a sacrament to interpret Wittgenstein's view of the harmony of language and reality, as the lecture notes on 9.3.1931 and the interpretation of the Cana story resemble Hamann's views. The elements of language are signs, like the words "Let's play a game of chess!" The institutions of language are the practices of use like playing and teaching chess. The practices connect the sign "Let's play a game of chess!" with its objects, like chess-pieces and the rules of

chess. They give the words "Let's play a game of chess!" a use, thereby making them meaningful. The practices of playing chess thus connect the meaning with the words "Let's play a game of chess!", and the words with the game of chess, thereby connecting the meaning of the words "Let's play a game of chess!" with games of chess, chess-pieces and the rules of chess. The connection of signs, meanings and objects take place against the background of communicative forms of life, which are more fundamental underlying practices (PI: §§23, 197, 431–432; see Baker & Hacker 1980, 1985; cf. Bayer 2002.) To sum up, language consists of

1. Elements: signs like "Let's play a game of chess!"

2. Institutions: rule-governed practices like playing and teaching chess.

3. Symbols, which form the harmony of language and reality: Meanings form a unity with their signs in a symbol and are connected with their objects through the institutions of regular use in linguistic practices and forms of life.

The sacramental metaphor can also illuminate commonalities in the grounds of Hamann's and Wittgenstein's philosophy of psychology and mathematics. According to the Lutheran tradition, a sacrament has its role and use in the exchange of words between God and man, so its normativity is communicative. Elements like bread and wine are constitutive of the sacrament, so they also help constitute to the spiritual relationship they mediate (cf. Kusch 2011). The metaphor of language as a sacrament has many important consequences in the philosophy of language. Language constitutes action in communicative relationships and conveys reality through linguistic communication, because the conveyed realities have a role in the activities of language-use. Concepts and expressions are united in language through regular language-use. The normativity of linguistic institutions and their rules is communicative. Therefore, there can be no private language-use outside linguistic relationships. Language has its worth and norms through language-use, which intertwines language and reality and makes reality, mental states and rational concepts a part of the language-games. There can, therefore, be no ideal concepts and norms of representation that are prior to language-use and no ideal languages expressing such ideal relationships. Language is used in activities and human life in the

world. Its institutions and actions are a free response based on a relationship of trust, which makes reality present in linguistic activities (LW: 37; Bayer 2002; cf. Hein 1983).

Hamann and Wittgenstein both build their discussions of the philosophy of psychology and the philosophy of mathematics on these overlapping views on the harmony of language and reality. Hamann uses divine sacramental language as a model for the mind/body-relationship and the authority of mathematical axioms:

> The passage from the divine to the human seems to me to be exposed to similar abuses. Both extremes must absolutely be united, to explain the whole, *ουσια του σοματοσ* and *εξουσια του αξιοματος.* Through this union a book becomes holy, like a *man becomes a prince.* A *κοινωνια* without transubstantiation—not a body, or a shadow, but *Spirit.* (ZH 4: 254)

Hamann proposes the view that the soul is embodied, and mathematical axioms and results have their authority through forms and institutions in relationships of action and use (Bayer 2002: 32–34). Mathematical certainty is constituted by mathematical language-use: "Mathematical certainty rests entirely on the nature of its language, and its way of writing (*Schreiberey*)" (ZH 5: 359). Similarly, the body expresses the hidden human personality, as divine language reveals God (Dickson 1995: 144–145):

> The *covering* form of the body, the *countenance* of the head, and the *extremities* of the arms are the *visible habit* in which we walk but are actually nothing but an *index* of the *secret self* within us; Each is a *miniature counterpart* of GOD. (N II: 198, quoted in Dickson 1995: 144)

Wittgenstein's views on the foundations of mathematics and psychology are "two fruits on the same tree" (Baker & Hacker 1985: 8–22). Both build on Wittgenstein's views of rule-following and the harmony of language and reality, which make up the core of the *Philosophical Investigations* (Baker & Hacker 1985: x). Wittgenstein argues that the referentialist Augustinian picture of language (PI: §2) is a misleading model for mathematical and psychological language. The key insight is that mathematical and psychological language is fundamentally communicative and operates with the elements of public expressions and the institutions of public language-games, practices and their rules. They thereby disclose and constitute private

states and mathematical results by articulating private states and the rules of mathematics in public discussion (cf. Taylor 1985; Bayer 2002: 296–306). Wittgenstein's strategy is to expose various forms of conceptual confusion by emphasizing language-use. Concepts are changed by taking them out of their linguistic contexts, the boundaries of language-games are transgressed and pictures based on different language-games cross to produce metaphysical nonsense (cf. Gray 2012; Dickson 1995: 311–318).

Hein (1983: 42–49; see also Labron 2009: 53–57) also notes that Hamann and Wittgenstein use an epistemology based on faith and trust to reject the Enlightenment's attempt to find an Archimedean point outside the world. Hamann argues that the modern subject/object split leads to an irresolvable problem of skepticism. Reason does not give us an Archimedean point, because language constitutes reason and language is based on experience, tradition and use. Language is dependent on faith, which involves the recognition of present reality. Wittgenstein argues that social and physical language-games are the foundations for giving reasons, so Cartesian doubt is in the end nonsensical. Like Hamann, he argues that language-games are possible only if we trust the realities that are present through them.

Hamann develops a view that knowledge is based on "faith alone" in *Sokratische Denkwürdigkeiten* (Betz 2009: 82–84):

> Our own existence and the existence of all things outside us must be believed and can be made out in no other way. (N II: 73, quoted in Betz 2009: 82–83)

Hamann argues that faith is the foundation for our knowledge and thus prior to reason. He goes on to discuss the story of Moses to show that reason is not even sufficient to produce belief: Moses had to trust God in order to believe that he would die, even though he had very strong empirical reasons to believe it (N II: 73). Dickson takes the importance of trust and personal relationships to mean that Hamann takes faith as a kind of "personal knowledge" (see Polanyi 1958). Faith is a personal relationship to the truth and the object of faith, which involves epistemological trust in the object and recognition of its presence (Dickson 1995: 70–71; Hein 1983: 47–49). Hamann links faith with the senses and uses the term

"Empfindung" ("experiential", N II: 73) to refer to it. Dickson interprets the term "Empfindung" to refer to a perception that establishes a relationship with the object and forms a holistic picture of it (1995: 47–49). Faith then interprets our experience and renders it credible as if it were seeing-as or Gestalt-formation. Hamann holds faith to be sensual, because he takes sensuous reality to be divine language. The interpretation of the world through belief-systems is thus a recognition of the address that we encounter through the senses (N II: 198–199; Bayer 2002: 78–80).

Wittgenstein argues for similar claims in *On Certainty*. One should keep in mind that Wittgenstein received the volume of Hamann's works containing *Sokratische Denkwürdigkeiten* as a Christmas present in 1950. He wrote the latter part of *On Certainty* (OC: §§300–651) between February and April 1951 and mentioned that he was reading Hamann in a letter on 14.3.1951 (McGuinness 2008: 475; Monk 1992: 576–579). Wittgenstein argues that language-games are based on faith:

> It is always by favour of Nature that one knows something. [...] I really want to say that a language-game is only possible if one trusts something (I did not say "can trust something"). (OC: §§505, 509)

Hein (1983: 48–49) comments these sections by comparing Wittgenstein to Hamann. Wittgenstein replaces the search for absolute foundations with an examination of our linguistic forms of life. Like Hamann, he holds that language is possible only, if we take reality to be trustworthy in our language-games. In OC §505, Wittgenstein even states that knowledge is in the end by grace alone. Wittgenstein wrote OC §505 on 11.4.1951, and on the 14.3. he wrote to Rhees that he had been reading Hamann.

Wittgenstein also takes up the belief-laden and relational nature of perception when discussing Gestalt-perception:

> It is almost as if 'seeing the sign in this context' were an echo of a thought.

> "The echo of a thought in sight"—one would like to say. (PI II: 213)

Wittgenstein here discusses the intertwining of senses and reason in Gestalt-perception (see Hein 1983, 22; Glock 1996, 36–40). Seeing a picture from a different angle is not a new private mental object. We

form a different relationship with the object by reacting differently. A new way of seeing or a new thought flashes through the old picture, because we form a new practice of looking at it. Wittgenstein took different ways of seeing things as a response to reality. Human beings naturally respond to certain general states of affairs with certain kinds of communicative action, and then build world-views for interpreting experience on these responses (Moore 2007). Wittgenstein argues that our world-views and Gestalts are practical responses to the world:

> We form *the picture* of the earth as a ball floating free in space and not altering essentially in a hundred years. I said "We form the *picture* etc." and this picture now helps us in the judgment of various situations. [...]

> The picture of the earth as a ball is a *good* picture, it proves itself everywhere, it is also a simple picture—in short, we work with it without doubting it. (OC: §§146–147)

I present the conclusion that interpreting Wittgenstein's late philosophy by using Hamann as a point of comparison reveals an important overlap in their views. Both develop a view emphasizing language-use, which analyzes language-use into signs, their rule-governed and practical use, and meanings that are made part of language and that are present in its symbols through use. The harmony of language and reality depends on the intertwining of words and concepts in use, which Hamann describes with the metaphor of sacramental divine language. Since meanings are constituted and intertwined with signs through use, there can be no private non-communicative languages or ideal languages that convey representative relationships that are conceptually prior to the use of signs. Language is a free and autonomous response to reality through interpretative practices, and it is based on trust and recognition of the objects that are its constitutive realities.

4. Conclusion

We have found out that Wittgenstein refers to Hamann's authorship in his diary remarks and letters from 1930–31 and 1950–51. He also was acquainted with the style and key themes of Hamann's work. The themes of divine language and knowledge through faith then

inspired Wittgenstein, when he was rethinking the harmony of language and reality in 1930–31, and the problem of knowledge in 1950–51. The comparison of Hamann's and Wittgenstein's view also highlights an important overlap in their views, as both argue that meanings are connected with signs through use, so neither non-communicative private languages nor ideal languages transporting prelinguistic concepts are possible.

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